



AUSTRALIAN NETWORK
ON DISABILITY

ACCESS AND INCLUSION INDEX BENCHMARK REPORT 2018-19

MAY 2019



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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MESSAGE FROM CEO

I'm delighted to present the 2018-19 Benchmark Report that provides valuable insight into accessibility and inclusion practices of organisations from the private, public and for-purpose sectors.

Since the Access and Inclusion Index (the Index) was launched in 2016, around 100 Australian Network on Disability (AND) members have used the tool to improve accessibility and inclusion of people with disability across their business. The Index has supported organisations to build their understanding and check their performance across 10 Key Areas or business functions.

This year 23 organisations submitted their Access and Inclusion Index self-assessment for evaluation and contributed to the Benchmark Report, with 10 completing it for a second or third time.

Each year, along with essential data on the progress organisations are making towards a disability confident Australia, we announce the three Top Performers. I'm pleased to announce that this year's Top Performers are IBM, Medibank and the National Disability Insurance Agency. I sincerely commend employees with disability, diversity and inclusion teams, executive sponsors and the leadership of IBM, Medibank and the National Disability Insurance Agency on this achievement.

These three organisations have demonstrated their long-term commitment, and investment, in access and inclusion of people with disability as customers, employees and stakeholders.

This commitment has been shown at a global level. At the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in January 2019, the economic inclusion of people with disability was discussed as a key priority. Businesses and business leaders are making themselves accountable for inclusion of people with disability in the workforce and making sure they know the practical steps they can take to drive this agenda.

I congratulate all the organisations that have made the commitment to complete the Access and Inclusion Index self-assessment and progress their systems, policies and practices. This year's Benchmark Report shows that organisations have a strong commitment to inclusion of people with disability and require a clear roadmap to progress their commitment into action.

I strongly encourage you to embrace the Access and Inclusion Index and participate in the evaluation and benchmarking process, to show your employees, customers and stakeholders your determination to build a disability confident Australia.

Regards



Suzanne Colbert AM
CEO

INTRODUCTION

The Access and Inclusion Index is Australia's foremost corporate benchmarking tool for inclusion of people with disability. It provides a unique opportunity for organisations to discover key areas of strength and opportunity across their business. By participating in the Access and Inclusion Index, organisations gain a roadmap for improvement and a national benchmark by which to measure and progress their maturity.

Since the Access and Inclusion Index was launched in 2016, 55 organisations have evaluated their performance and contributed to the Benchmark Report findings. These organisations employ approximately 648,000 people nationally. 14 of those organisations have continued to check their progress against the Index by participating year on year.

The Australian Network on Disability applauds the organisations that have participated in the Access and Inclusion Index benchmarks over the last three years and strongly encourages more organisations to check their progress and contribute to Australia's disability confidence.

What we have learned from the last three Benchmark Reports is that organisations are ready and willing to make positive change and contribute to the access and inclusion knowledge bank. Through capable and determined leadership, clear policies, procedures and plans, our members have demonstrated their commitment to advance inclusion of people with disability across their whole business.

FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION

The next step is to turn commitments into actions, guided by the best practices of high-performing organisations.

The case studies shared in this report are a snapshot of the incredible initiatives Australian organisations have developed to welcome and include employees, customers, and stakeholders with disability.

This year, 23 members embarked on the journey and used the Access and Inclusion Index to evaluate and benchmark their disability confidence. These included public and private sector organisations from a wide range of industries, such as finance, insurance, technology, healthcare, education and utilities.

The Australian Network on Disability's role is to foster greater collaboration, connection and sharing across our network, and support all our members to reach the next stage in their journey towards greater inclusion of people with disability. Together, we can make a profound impact on the equitable inclusion of people with disability in Australian society.

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 people with disability across their businesses.

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 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. 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 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 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 the questions according to their relative importance and impact on access and inclusion for people with disability and produces 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.

MEDIBANK – GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Medibank has participated in the Access and Inclusion Index since 2016, showing improvement across all scores. In 2018, they reached the top three on the Index in Australia.

Medibank Employee Listening Lead Nigel Davis said: “When we looked deeper, we realised we had much more to do when it came to accessibility and inclusion for people with disability. The Index provided us with a detailed analysis of where we should focus our efforts which helped with planning.”

Nigel believes getting support from senior leaders is key to changing company culture around inclusion, with the Index providing a solid case for change.

“It showed us how we compared to other organisations. It was clear we had to do more. We took a whole of business approach with the goal of putting inclusion and access for employees and customers at the front of mind.”

As part of accessibility and inclusion planning, forums were held involving leaders and people with disability.

Medibank Head of Culture and Inclusion Craig Frost said: “This was critical. We needed to hear directly from employees and customers with disability. They told us about their recruitment, employee and customer experiences, giving us more clarity on where we needed to go.”

One of the most important steps Medibank took was to address and improve digital access.

“We knew this was an area we needed to improve urgently, so we asked specialist digital access consultants to conduct an accessibility audit. They provided us with recommendations we could take on board fairly quickly, improving the digital experience for employees and customers, including our website and mobile apps,” added Craig.

Last year, Medibank launched its first ‘Accessibility & Inclusion Plan’ with commitments to be achieved over the next four years. This includes making accessibility features available in all retail stores, dignified access in store refits and ensuring future marketing imagery is representative of people with disability. However, Craig believes there’s already a positive cultural shift in the organisation.

“The Index helps us monitor progress. Employee engagement surveys, employment and customer data also offer valuable feedback. We keep listening and responding to what we’re doing well and where we can improve,” said Craig.

When asked what the three most important factors are when it comes to improving inclusion for people with disability, the team answered:

Leadership – “You need supportive leaders who understand with both hearts and minds.”

Commitment – “Draw up a plan, no matter how simple, and continue to evaluate what you’re doing.”

Curiosity – “Listen and learn from people’s lived experience.”

KEY FINDINGS

LEADING ORGANISATIONS

Australian Network on Disability is very pleased to announce the 2018-19 leading organisations are:

1. IBM
2. Medibank
3. National Disability Insurance Agency

Congratulations to the top three organisations, which scored over 80% and demonstrated their clear commitment to accessible and inclusive practices.

Results

The average score across the 23 participating members was 44/100 – an increase from an average of 38/100 in the 2017-18 benchmark. The distribution of 2018-19 scores is shown in Table 1 and Figure 1. To ensure ample time to implement the recommendations and roadmap provided in their Evaluation Reports, some organisations have committed to benchmarking their performance every second year.

Commitment to Access and Inclusion for people with disability was the highest performing Key Area and this year one organisation achieved a Strategic rating for their Commitment. The second most-mature practices were Workplace Adjustments, with three organisations operating at the Strategic level.

Communications and Marketing, Products and Services, Information Communication Technology, Recruitment and Selection and Career Development saw an increase in the average maturity by half a point and are not yet at Programmatic level.

Premises, Career Development and Innovation remained at a Basic level of maturity. Suppliers and Partners declined by half a point, with the majority of organisations not yet participating.

Organisations that have previously participated in benchmarking and followed the roadmap in their comprehensive report have demonstrated strong progress.

Year-on-year progress

Of the 23 organisations that benchmarked their performance this year, 57% participated for the first time, 26% for the second time and 17% for the third time. Three of the repeat participants increased their performance by a staggering 39%. Of the top ten performers, 60% had previously participated in benchmarking and progressed using their roadmap.

DISTRIBUTION OF INDEX SCORES

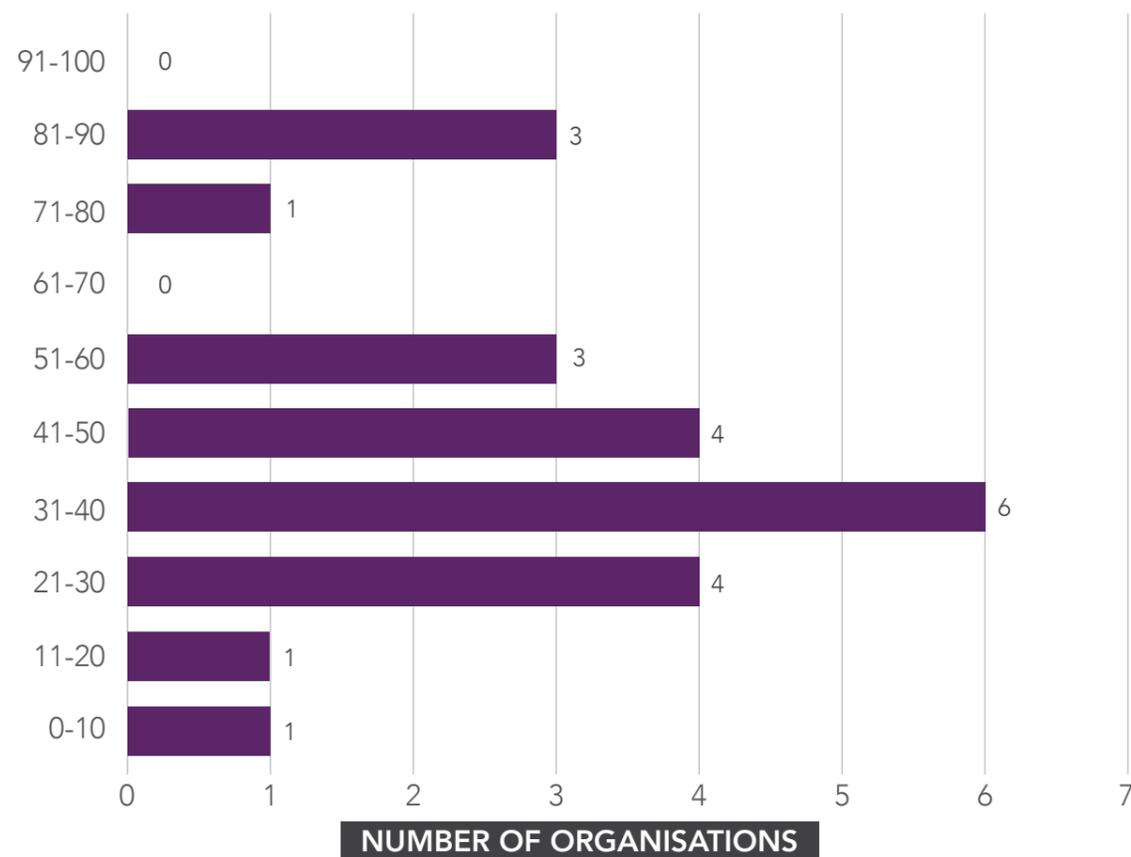


Figure 1 Distribution of Access and Inclusion Index scores

ACCESS AND INCLUSION SCORE RANGE	NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS
91-100	0
81-90	3
71-80	1
61-70	0
51-60	3
41-50	4
31-40	6
21-30	4
11-20	1
0-10	1
TOTAL	23

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

KEY AREAS

The ten Key Areas in the Access and Inclusion Index represent a 'whole-of-organisation' approach to ensuring access and inclusion. Over the last three years, organisations have focused on Commitment, Workplace Adjustments, Recruitment and Selection, and Premises.

Career Development, Products and Services, Marketing and Communications and ICT continue to score at lower maturity levels, showing there is a need for greater awareness, education and practical guidance in these areas to implement sustainable change.

MATURITY LEVELS

The average maturity level across all Index participants for each Key Area are shown in Table 2 and Figure 2. The maturity levels are:

- Level 1 (1.0) – Not participating
- Level 2 (2.0) – Basic
- Level 3 (3.0) – Programmatic
- Level 4 (4.0) – Strategic

MATURITY LEVEL FOR EACH KEY AREA

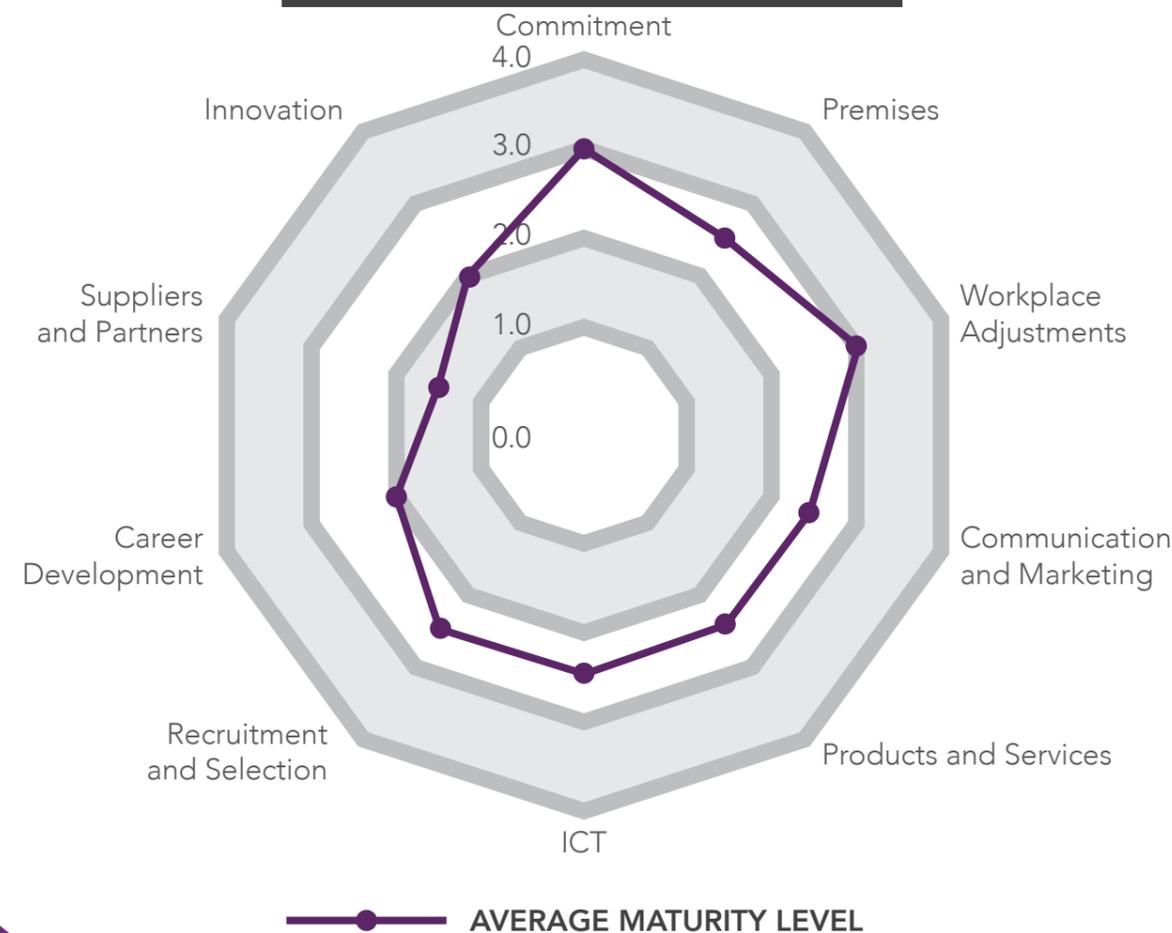


Figure 2 Index average maturity level by Key Area

OVERALL MATURITY BY KEY AREA	AVERAGE MATURITY LEVEL - ALL ORGS
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	2.0
Suppliers and Partners	1.5
Innovation	2.0

Table 2 Index average maturity level by Key Area (data)

Commitment

61% of participating organisations have policies or plans in place that address some issues or focus on some parts of their business or operations. As in previous years, Commitment is one of the highest-scoring areas across participating organisations.

Encouragingly, the majority of organisations scored highly in relation to the activities and commitment of their Disability Champions and senior leaders. One organisation achieved a perfect score in this area, with a rating of Strategic for all questions.

Premises

30% of organisations are not yet involving Premises in their access and inclusion activities. The majority of organisations have a Basic or compliance-only approach. This outcome reflects the need for organisations to focus on engaging relevant people on accessibility and inclusive practice and ensuring that people with disability are regularly consulted on the accessibility of premises.

Workplace Adjustments

Consistent with the 2017-18 Index, Workplace Adjustments was one of the highest-scoring areas. 40% of organisations have policies and procedures in place and another 13% of organisations operating at the Strategic level have processes and practices that deliver a consistently accessible and inclusive experience for employees with disability.

30% of organisations have not yet taken action on Workplace Adjustments and another 17% are operating at a Basic level and have reactive responses.

Efficient and effective Workplace Adjustments policy and procedures are an important foundation of disability confident organisations.

To increase maturity in this area, organisations need to focus on improving the experience of employees requiring workplace adjustments through the collection and analysis of feedback.

Communication and Marketing

Communications and Marketing continues to be a low-scoring area of the Index, with Basic maturity. While none of the participating organisations achieved a Strategic rating in this area, 47% had tactics, policies or procedures in place and scored at a Programmatic maturity level. These scores were characterised by having strong written policies and frameworks in place to support relevant staff in their contribution to accessible and inclusive marketing and communications practices.

More focus needs to be applied to review practices to ensure all communications and marketing channels consider the various needs and experiences of employees, customers and stakeholders with disability.

Products and Services

The Products and Services area represents the huge potential that Australian businesses have to tap into the entire customer base. Organisations that performed well in this area have policies and procedures in place to support the design and improvement of their products and services, in line with universal design principles. However, almost 74% of participating organisations scored in the Basic range or below, reflecting a reactive or compliance-only approach to meeting the needs of customers with disability.

As in most areas, the most improvement is needed in the regular review of processes and customer feedback channels to ensure continued innovation. Organisations have significant opportunity in this area to ensure they remain competitive in their industries by designing, delivering and innovating in alignment with best-practice principles.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

The average maturity level achieved in the ICT area was Basic, with the majority of organisations yet to implement any initiatives or processes in relation

to accessible ICT. A small number of organisations achieved a Programmatic maturity level in this area, demonstrated by individual programs or practices that support access and inclusion in ICT.

While most organisations have a formal written commitment to adhere to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), many do not have procedures in place to ensure these commitments are met.

To increase maturity in this area, greater focus is needed on ensuring frameworks are consistently implemented, and that digital accessibility is regularly reviewed against current standards. The WCAG were updated in July 2018 from version 2.0 to version 2.1. It is expected that organisations with robust review systems in place will have plans to upgrade and update systems to meet or exceed these global standards in 2019.

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and Selection is considered another foundation of a disability confident organisation. Over the last three years of the Index, the average performance across all participating organisations has remained at a Basic maturity level, reflecting a reactive approach to inclusive and barrier-free recruitment and selection. With almost 70% of organisations scoring Basic or below, it is evident that this area should remain a priority for most.

Some organisations achieved a Programmatic maturity level in this area, characterised by strong commitment to employ people with disability and the implementation of programs and initiatives to attract and recruit talent. Many organisations are also in the process of reviewing recruitment and selection practices to remove unintended barriers. With this in mind, it is anticipated that maturity levels will rise in the coming years as organisations address and implement the recommendations of recruitment and selection reviews.

Career Development

In recent years, organisations have placed greater focus on retaining and developing employees with disability. The Career Development area showed some improvement on previous years, with the majority of organisations achieving a Basic level of maturity. This was demonstrated by greater consideration of accessibility and inclusive practices in the delivery of training and development opportunities.

Some organisations are performing at a Programmatic maturity level. These organisations demonstrated strong commitment to drive and advance inclusion through active and influential groups of employees, and have implemented or are in the process of rolling out programs to support both employees and jobseekers with disability to develop in their careers. A slightly higher overall score in the review section reflects a strong focus on gathering feedback and data in relation to employee engagement and satisfaction with career development and progression.

To progress to a higher level of maturity in this area, a more sustained and proactive approach to including people with disability in career development and learning opportunities is required.

Suppliers and Partners

Across all three benchmark years, Suppliers and Partners has consistently received less attention. This is an area that provides substantial opportunity for organisations to have a broader impact on inclusive practice within the Australian workforce. This year, 82% of participating organisations achieved a maturity level of Basic or Not Participating. While some organisations demonstrated remarkable examples of innovation and advancement in this area, it is evident from the overall results that greater focus is needed on developing systems and processes that progress access and inclusion through procurement. By taking a proactive approach to influencing the practices of suppliers and partners, organisations drive the development of accessible and inclusive products and services. The Suppliers and Partners Key Area offers many potential business benefits, as organisations shift to a sustainable approach to selecting key business partners.

LEARNINGS FROM A LEGACY OF INCLUSION AT IBM

IBM has a long, proud history of diversity and inclusion which dates back over a century. Way ahead of its time, IBM hired women long before they were given the right to vote and in 1914 hired its first employee with disability, 76 years before the Americans with Disabilities Act.

With diversity and inclusion a clear business priority since its foundations, we spoke with Keri Le Page, IBM Inclusion and Diversity Partner Australia/New Zealand, about accessibility at IBM today, and what that means for their suppliers and partners.

“Inclusion is certainly imprinted on our DNA and we’ve been reaping the rewards of diversity, right back from when we were founded,” said Keri.

“For our suppliers, that means they’re expected to meet our standards when it comes to accessibility. All information and IT must be able to be used successfully by people with disability. To make it easier for them, we have a detailed suite of web applications and guidelines they’re encouraged to use to ensure their products and services are fully accessible.”

The company’s accessibility guidelines include; accessibility checklists for vendors and suppliers, a supplier diversity registration portal, developer guidelines and accessibility conformance reports.

“We’re a large, international organisation, and we use the same guidelines across the globe to ensure consistency. All suppliers and vendors that sell or license software, hardware, web, learning and IT related products and services are strongly encouraged to ensure that the products they sell are accessible. We use an Accessibility Compliance System (ACS) tool to manage accessibility compliance for all products and assets we develop or procure,” she said.



“It’s not just about doing the right thing – it’s about creating quality products.”

An array of solutions and best practices that speed development efforts and help ensure web and mobile apps conform to industry accessibility standards, is readily available on the company’s website.

The company also employs accessibility teams across the globe to test products to make sure that their technology solutions meet the essential accessibility requirements.

“Accessibility is all part of a bigger picture – IBM’s staunch commitment to diversity and inclusion. I work as part of a global team, influencing strategy and direction with an Australia and New Zealand perspective. With over 60 people internationally in the diversity team, I have amazing resources to draw on. There’s always something going on and exciting new developments happening.”

A culture of acceptance and inclusion that began over a century ago clearly permeates throughout the company today.

For the leaders at IBM, they consider its legacy in diversity and inclusion, and its progress, as having cultivated its leadership position among its technology peers and others in the business world – a win for all.

CROSS SECTION OF RESULTS

The spread of scores across maturity levels were similar to the results from the 2017-18 Benchmark Report. There was a strong maturity in Commitment, with 14 out of 23 organisations performing at a Programmatic level.

The area of Workplace Adjustments also demonstrated excellent practice with three organisations achieving a Strategic level of maturity. A Strategic approach is demonstrated by having clear and well-communicated policies and procedures in place, adjustments implemented on request and a systematic approach to reviewing feedback from employees. The Australian Network on Disability regards Workplace Adjustments as a foundation for an inclusive workplace.

Most organisations achieved a Basic to Programmatic level of maturity in Premises,

Communication and Marketing, Products and Services, ICT, Recruitment and Selection, and Career Development. The next steps for organisations performing at 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 the Suppliers and Partners area, the majority of organisations are Not Participating. Organisations that are yet to address access and inclusion in their procurement practices have an opportunity to develop frameworks to support their commitment to best practice in the Suppliers and Partners area.

The Access and Inclusion Index provides the information and direction for organisations to adopt proven best practice and advance their maturity.

The maturity level for each organisation in each Key Area is shown in Table 3 and Figure 3.



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 4
Commitment	1	7	14	1
Premises	7	9	7	0
Workplace Adjustments	7	4	9	3
Communication and Marketing	6	6	11	0
Products and Services	8	9	3	3
ICT	9	8	6	0
Recruitment and Selection	9	7	7	0
Career Development	7	11	5	0
Suppliers and Partners	15	4	3	1
Innovation	8	8	5	2

Table 3 Number of organisations by maturity band and Key Area (data)

FRAMEWORK, IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Figure 4 and Table 4 shows the average maturity level relating to Framework, Implementation and Review. These results show the maturity level of organisations from policy development through to monitoring and continuous improvement in each Key Area. Scores are fairly consistent across all three areas, with a trend towards greater maturity in Framework and Implementation, and lesser maturity in Review.

Across the three categories, the Index tool helps organisations identify their current good practice and build on these to develop a more systematic approach, which will significantly increase their maturity. Recognising current good practice encourages and motivates, and makes it easier for consistent delivery across the organisation.

An additional Key Area titled Innovation is included in the Access and Inclusion Index and is measured separately from these three categories.

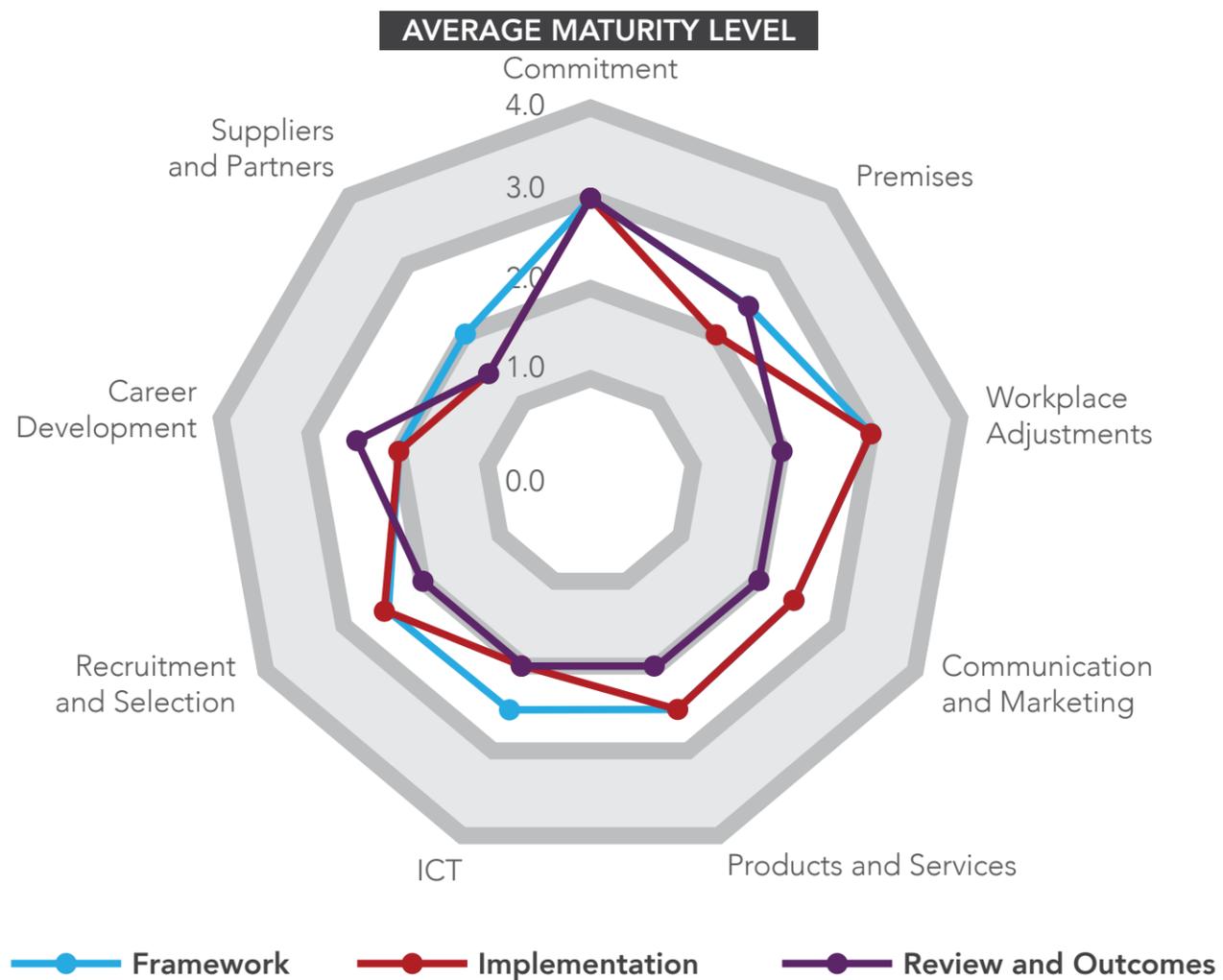


Figure 4 Average maturity level in Framework, Implementation and Review by Key Area

KEY AREAS	FRAMEWORK	IMPLEMENTATION	REVIEW
Commitment	3.0	3.0	3.0
Premises	2.5	2.0	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	2.0	2.0	2.5
Suppliers and Partners	2.0	1.5	1.5

Table 4 Average maturity level in Framework, Implementation and Review by Key Area (data)

INCLUSIVE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION AT NDIA

Since its inception, The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has had a strong focus on inclusive recruitment practices, and in 2016 the agency became the first Australian Public Service to attain AND's Disability Confident Recruiter (DCR) status.

Tim Wedding, Assistant Director Inclusion and Diversity Support Unit, NDIA, shares the secrets of their success.

"At NDIA, we're open about the fact that we aim to be world leaders when it comes to employment of people with disability. Working towards – and ultimately attaining – DCR status really helped sharpen our focus, and our annual participation in the Access and Inclusion Index is always a useful opportunity to undertake an honest assessment of how we're tracking," says Tim.

NDIA actively seeks talent with disability through a number of avenues, including AND's Stepping Into internship program, disability recruitment services and its own extensive disability networks. Its recruitment and selection processes ensure adjustments for candidates with disability are provided from the start of the recruitment process, through to on-boarding.

"We ask for preferred methods of contact from applicants and get in touch early on to discuss any adjustments they may need. Not only does this allow us to arrange the adjustments, it also signals that we're a welcoming and supportive workplace where people can feel comfortable sharing their information," he says.

An important figure in this process is the Disability Liaison Officer (DLO), whose specialist role is to ensure candidates with disability are provided with everything they need, to make for a smooth recruitment and on-boarding process.

"At the recruitment stage, the adjustments a DLO organises might range from interpreters, to quiet rooms, or the ability to stand in the interview. When a candidate is offered a position, the DLO looks at the workplace, arranges assessments from Occupational Therapists where necessary, and actions any recommendations. We always aim to have adjustments in place as soon as the employee starts work with us," says Tim.

When it comes to inclusive recruitment, NDIA recognises that it's not only its own internal processes that matter. Like many organisations, NDIA uses outsourced recruitment services to attract talent, but they make sure all providers they use are also able to confidently support applicants with disability.

"We align with organisations and providers that share similar beliefs. Having DCR status is a prerequisite for working with us, so we know our candidates will receive a level of attention to inclusion that's in line with our standards," he says.

When asked what advice he'd give to other organisations looking to improve inclusion in their recruitment processes, Tim says promoting your values goes a long way.

"Candidates can often feel reluctant to share information about their disability. Show clear information early on around exactly how your recruitment practices are inclusive, demonstrate that all employees are valued and supported. It's only through those open displays of inclusion that perceived barriers can be broken down – then, you're a step closer to enjoying the benefits of an inclusive, diverse workforce."

INNOVATION

Innovation is assessed differently from other Key Areas.

There are two questions only. The first asks about innovative practices for employees with disability and the second asks about innovations for customers, clients or service users.

Responses to both questions are considered during assessment. The response options and maturity levels for innovation were referred to as:

- **Level 1 (Not participating)** – No, we have not implemented an innovative policy or practice.
- **Level 2 (Basic)** – Yes, but the impact of the measure has not yet been measured.
- **Level 3 (Programmatic)** – Yes, and the impact has been measured or is in the process of being measured for the lessons learned from this innovation, or the innovation is currently running successfully but is too early to be formally measured.
- **Level 4 (Strategic)** – Yes, we have measured the success of the innovation and it is part of, or is in the process of being made part of, our standard business practices.

INNOVATION	ORGS NOT PARTICIPATING	ORGS AT BASIC	ORGS AT PROGRAMMATIC	ORGS AT STRATEGIC
For employees	7	9	5	2
For customers, clients or service users	7	7	4	5

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

The 2018-19 Index showed there has been an even focus on seeking innovative solutions and practices for employees and customers, clients and service users with disability. This is not surprising, with many of the organisations involved servicing customers nationally with significant opportunity for impact.

Most of the employee-related Innovation focused on raising awareness through storytelling, sharing the experiences and perspectives of people with disability at work through employee resource groups and dedicated events. Other Innovations for employees focused on improving the experience of employees with disability at work through the design and implementation of world-leading technology and best-practice flexibility policies.

Innovations aimed at customers, clients and service users focused mainly on ensuring communication channels not only support people with disability to access information, but also ensure easy navigation and comprehension of information. There were some great examples of innovations in technology, website and app designs targeting customers whose vision, comprehension or reading ability is impacted by disability.

CREATIVE MINDS BEHIND STUDENT MENTAL WELLBEING AT RMIT

One in four students experiences mental health issues – a statistic that’s not lost on the leadership team at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT).

In 2017, RMIT’s Academic Board endorsed a Framework for Promoting Student Mental Wellbeing in Universities, establishing a specialist team to develop and implement sustainable initiatives under action areas of the Framework – and they’ve enjoyed great success.

RMIT Project Managers, Student Wellbeing Initiatives, Vanna Garrick and Darcy Keogh describe two of the programs their team implemented in 2018, and why they worked.

“First up, we knew stigma needed to be addressed as a priority. It was something we identified early on as a major barrier to seeking help for mental health issues,” said Vanna.

“We worked with students to create ‘It’s OK to not be OK’, a simple but effective engagement campaign that coincided with exam time.”

The campaign encouraged students to join the conversation about mental health, gain insights from peers and offer personal messages of support to other students via digital. For two weeks, It’s OK to not be OK flooded all RMIT-owned communication channels including digital screens on campus, social media, website and campus computers.

“We wanted to do something that was new and positive, but also informed and safe. Our campaign lead, Dr Luke Martin played a pivotal role in this. Student messages of support were moderated, so we were able to quickly respond to anyone in need of extra support.”

It’s OK not to be OK really took off, with over 200 messages of support and a 300,000+ reach on social media.

“We were delighted with the success but not surprised. It was a heartening confirmation that our community truly gets the importance of mental health and is willing to express their care for others.”

Meanwhile, the team took over 100 applications from students to solve a real-world problem – ‘How can we enhance the mental wellbeing of students at RMIT?’.

Forty students were selected, \$10,000 seed funding was provided and the university’s start-up unit, RMIT Activator, delivered a three-day workshop, guiding them through a design thinking process to a solution that would be visible, engaging and inclusive of all students.

“The result was ‘Foremind’, a team with the aim of creating a proactive student mental health culture,” said Darcy.

“Having the creative minds of 40 passionate students working collaboratively made for some really innovative ways to approach the issue of student wellbeing,” he said.

Foremind created Wind Down Wednesday, a relaxed event to coincide with World Mental Health Day. Wind Down Wednesday provided stress-relief during the pre-exam period, involving ball pits, green spaces, jars of marbles and a giant wall featuring messages of support, anxieties and gratitude.

“We wanted to hear the student voice loudly, so it had to be led by them. It really paid off.”

Vanna says participating in the Access and Inclusion Index gives them the valuable opportunity for a comprehensive measure of progress and areas for improvement, which helps guide their actions.

“Importantly, the scores also help us engage with accountable leaders,” said Vanna.

“We have a supportive leadership here at RMIT, which is evidenced by their endorsement of the Framework. Having their backing makes true success so much more achievable.”



TAKING ACTION TOGETHER

The 2018-19 Access and Inclusion Benchmark Report provides important insights into the practices and maturity of Australian organisations. We thank the 23 AND members for being part of the 2018 -19 Index and sharing their access and inclusion journey. By sharing knowledge, understanding challenges and checking progress, members of the Australian Network on Disability are paving the way to greater inclusion of people with disability.

It’s our hope that the competitive spirit and the increased focus on measuring progress will create sustainable change and drive other organisations to mobilise their commitments and actions.

Together, we can make a profound impact on the equitable inclusion of people with disability in Australian society.

HOW TO CONNECT WITH US



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