



Pacific Disability Forum

Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) Response to Australia's International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy (IDEARS) 3rd December 2024

In its message to commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Pacific Disability Forum expresses its strong support for the recent launch of Australia's International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy (IDEARS).

On November 28, 2024, the IDEARS was officially launched in Canberra's Federal Parliament House by Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Australian Minister for International Development and the Pacific Pat Conroy MP, and Minister Amanda Rishworth, Minister for Social Services. The event was attended by over one hundred distinguished guests including many Disability Champions and Ambassadors from Australia and neighbouring countries. Among those present was Ms. Sainimili Tawake, Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) who says, 'Through this Strategy, the Australian Government has reaffirmed its commitment to advancing disability rights as fundamental human rights, addressing discrimination and exclusion at all levels of society.'

Ms Tawake emphasised that the Strategy highlights the importance of bringing focused efforts to disability equity and rights and recognising the needs to meet essential preconditions to enable inclusion of people with disabilities in all their diversity. Ms Tawake added that the strategy underscores Australia's dedication to international collaboration and to ensuring that disability rights principles are integrated into broader development agendas on the regional and global levels.

The Strategy shows a strong commitment to ensuring persons with disabilities and their representative organisations are included in all aspects of international cooperation. Ms Tawake says 'Moreover this Strategy shows the Australian Government has taken on board strong advocacy calls around the need to provide appropriate support to the disability movement to enable their participation, such as core funding, capacity building, partnerships and leadership opportunities. PDF looks forward to working with the Australian Government on the shaping and delivery of these commitments and initiatives.'

PDF acknowledges the Australian Government for its global leadership in developing this transformative strategy and is particularly encouraged by the Strategy's focus on the Pacific region, and significant investment of \$12 million for assistive technology.

Ms Tawake concluded that while it is a time to celebrate, eyes must also be set on the Strategy's set of disability equity performance targets for its international development program. These aim for 60 percent of all of Australia's international aid and humanitarian programming to be performing effectively on disability equity by 2026. This target will increase to 70 percent by 2030. These benchmarks are designed to hold the program accountable and ensure that it actively contributes to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities. PDF stands ready to support Australia in the rollout of the strategy.

For more information, please email to: info@pacificdisability.org

End.