

Inclusive Engagement Framework



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**Engaging people from culturally
and linguistically diverse
backgrounds with disability**

Grounded in best-practice research and lived experience, this guide supports government agencies, the disability sector and funded organisations to deliver engagement that is culturally safe, accessible and accountable.



Inclusive Engagement: A Framework for engaging people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds with disability.

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Contents

Acknowledgement	04
AMPARO Advocacy's Management Committee President Forward	06
About AMPARO Advocacy	07
Part A – Core Commitments	
1.0 Introduction	08
2.0 Purpose and scope	11
3.0 Who this Framework is for and how to use it	12
4.0 What informs this Framework	13
5.0 How this Framework was developed	15
6.0 Understanding CALD communities and disabilities	16
7.0 What good and poor engagement feel like	20
8.0 Guiding principles for engaging people from CALD backgrounds	22
9.0 Governance and accountability	26
Part B – The CALD Engagement Cycle	30
10.0 Prepare for engagement	32
11.0 Design engagement	32
12.0 Deliver engagement	34
13.0 Closing the loop and improvement	37
Part C – Tools and examples	40
Guiding Principles at a Glance	41
The Engagement Cycle – Who Does What	43
References	45



Acknowledgement

AMPARO Advocacy acknowledges Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of this land, and recognises their continuing connection to Country, culture, community, language, knowledge and traditions.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and acknowledge the strength, leadership and resilience of First Nations peoples, families and communities across Queensland.

We recognise that meaningful inclusion, human rights and social justice are grounded in truth-telling, respect and shared responsibility. In developing and using this Inclusive Engagement Framework, AMPARO Advocacy invites government agencies, the disability sector and community partners to walk alongside First Nations peoples and all culturally diverse communities with humility, accountability and a willingness to listen, learn and act.

AMPARO Advocacy acknowledges the Queensland Government's Department of Families, Seniors, Disability

Services and Child Safety for its funding support, and Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) for commissioning this work as part of the Queensland Disability Stakeholder Engagement and Co-design Strategy, delivered alongside fellow project partners CRU, Mob4Mob and Griffith University.

We also acknowledge and thank AMPARO Advocacy's CALD Inclusion Consultants and the members of its Inclusive Leadership Network (ILN), whose expertise, lived experience and generosity of time shaped every part of this Framework.

This Framework is offered as a shared commitment to respectful, culturally safe and accountable engagement. AMPARO Advocacy encourages government agencies, the disability sector and community partners to use this Framework with care, integrity and a genuine commitment to strengthening the rights, inclusion and participation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with disability, their families and communities.

**A Framework to
ensure respectful,
inclusive, and
effective engagement
with culturally and
linguistically diverse
individuals with
disability and their
families.**

“Stop pretending you’re doing me a favour by talking to me”



**President
Shahram Jazan**

Management Committee, AMPARO Advocacy

Santiago Velasquez
Founder & CEO EyeSyght & Hailo

*(Queensland Disability State Conference – Access All
Areas: The Road Ahead, Friday 11 September 2026)*

AMPARO Advocacy’s Management Committee President Forward

On behalf of the AMPARO Advocacy Management Committee, I commend to you AMPARO’s “Inclusive Engagement: A Framework for engaging culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability” (the Framework).

The Framework is unprecedented. It is an evidence-based publication that can guide Queensland Government, the disability sector and other key multidisciplinary agencies on how to co-design policy, planning and service implementation with people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds with disability. This is more than good practice – Article 4.3 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities obliges government to closely consult with, and genuine adoption of the Framework means embedding it in procurement, contracts and funding agreements. It is also deeply grounded in the leadership, voices, priorities, strengths and lived experiences of the people and communities AMPARO Advocacy serves: all aspects of the Framework have been developed by people from CALD backgrounds with disability living in Queensland who form our Inclusive Leadership Network (ILN). But those who shaped the Framework are not interested in it being

words on paper. Relationships, valued partnerships, policy, and investment will be critical in bringing the practice of co-design to life and embedding it into everyday organisational and operational practice across our State. With the significant amount of change occurring across the disability landscape in Queensland and Australia, it will be too tempting to treat co-design as too time intensive, too hard. That thinking must be challenged.

There is nothing about us without us, and led by us, without co-design.

My congratulations to all AMPARO Advocacy staff and members of our ILN for their commitment and hard work in developing this seminal publication. My thanks also to the Queensland Disability Network and the Queensland Government Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety for the tremendous support given to AMPARO Advocacy to prepare the Framework.

Yours sincerely,
Shahram Jazan | President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shahram Jazan'.



ABOUT AMPARO

AMPARO Advocacy is a non-profit community-based organisation which provides independent, individual and systemic advocacy with and on behalf of vulnerable people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds with disability. As a Peak and Representative body for people from CALD backgrounds with disability in Queensland, AMPARO Advocacy continues to highlight the voices and concerns of people with disabilities and their families to bring about positive sustainable changes to legislation, policy and practice.

AMPARO Advocacy is governed by a voluntary management committee, the majority of whom are themselves people from a CALD background with disability.

AMPARO Advocacy is funded by the Queensland Government Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety, and at the Commonwealth level through the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

AMPARO Advocacy's mission is to defend, protect and promote the human rights, interests and inclusion of vulnerable people from a CALD background with disability.

Our vision is that people from a CALD background with disability are respected, valued and included in family, community and the broader society, with equitable access to information, services and supports.



Part A

Core Commitments

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Inclusive Engagement Framework (Framework) has been developed by AMPARO Advocacy to support respectful, inclusive and effective engagement with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with disability, their families and communities.

This Framework is intended for use by government agencies, the disability sector, funded organisations and community partners who plan, fund, commission or deliver engagement activities. It provides practical guidance for designing engagement that is culturally safe, accessible, trauma-informed and accountable.

Grounded in the lived experience of people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families, the Framework recognises that meaningful engagement must go beyond consultation. It requires early involvement, clear communication, adequate resourcing, respect for lived experience, and a commitment to showing how people's input has influenced decisions and actions.

The Framework should be used as a guide to support better practice, strengthen trust with CALD communities, and ensure engagement leads to more equitable policies, services and outcomes.



How this Framework fits within Queensland's disability reform work

AMPARO Advocacy's Framework has been co-designed – in alignment with best-practice Frameworks for inclusive and accessible engagement – with AMPARO Advocacy's CALD Inclusion Consultants and members of its Inclusive Leadership Network, as part of the Queensland Disability Stakeholder Engagement and Co-Design Strategy (SEC Strategy). This ensures the Framework reflects lived experience, cultural nuance, and accessibility, rather than being imposed externally.

It is intended to guide how the SEC Strategy is implemented in the Disability Engagement and Co-Design Hub and for use by Queensland Government agencies and partner organisations that engage with people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families across all disability reform activities.

Key Objectives

The key objectives of this Framework are to:

- support government agencies, the disability sector and community partners to plan and deliver engagement that is culturally safe, accessible, inclusive and trauma-informed;
- strengthen the participation and influence of people from CALD backgrounds with disability, their families and communities in decisions that affect their lives;
- promote respectful partnerships with CALD communities, CALD-led organisations, bicultural workers, peer leaders and people with lived experience;
- provide practical guidance, principles and tools that can be adapted across different engagement activities, communities and local contexts; and
- encourage stronger accountability, so participants can see how their input has informed decisions, actions and improvements over time

[Download the Resource Pack →](#)

Why this matters?

→ Research commissioned by the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) found that good practice requires engagement at system, organisational, and individual levels, including involving people with disability from CALD backgrounds in service development, implementation, management and monitoring; providing culturally responsive information and services; and building staff capacity to work respectfully and effectively across diverse communities (Bates et al., 2022).

→ The National Disability Insurance Agency's (NDIA) **NDIS Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy 2024–2028** was co-designed with more than 800 people from CALD backgrounds, including participants, families, carers, peak bodies, sector representatives and NDIA staff. Its accompanying Action Plan sets out 28 actions across six priority areas - infrastructure, staff capability, accessible communications, markets, data and outreach - highlighting the importance of engagement that is inclusive, practical and action-oriented (National Disability Insurance Agency, 2024a, 2024b).

→ **The Good Practice Guidelines for Engaging with People with Disability** provide a practical guide for ensuring engagement is accessible,

inclusive, respectful and meaningful, with an emphasis on planning and delivering engagement processes that enable people with disability to participate in community consultation, policy development and government decision making (Department of Social Services, 2025).

→ The Disability Royal Commission-commissioned research report **Towards best-practice access to services for culturally and linguistically diverse people with a disability** identifies three core elements of trustworthy and effective service access: understanding and engaging with the intersecting experiences of people with disability from CALD backgrounds; involving people with disability from CALD backgrounds at all stages of developing, implementing and managing services; and committing to continuous monitoring and improvement so systems remain responsive to their needs (Bates et al., 2022).

→ Queensland-specific guidance, such as **A guide to effectively engaging with CALD communities: Based on lessons learnt during COVID-19**, reinforces the importance of building trust, empathy and empowerment by supporting local CALD-led networks, strengthening authentic partnerships, and avoiding top-down engagement approaches (Obeyesekere, 2023).





A Note On Terminology

In this Framework the term culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities is used because it remains the operating term across the data, funding and policy systems this Framework needs to connect with at Federal and State levels.

CALD is a majority-lens term (Sawrikar & Katz, 2009). It groups together people with vastly different histories, languages, faiths and migration pathways – from a person born overseas now working in Australia as a skilled migrant to a family who arrived as refugees a generation ago – as though they were one population with one set of needs. Many people who fall within this definition do not use the term “CALD” to describe themselves or their own communities, and some find it alienating. Researchers

and practitioners are increasingly calling for the term to be retired altogether (Pourmarzi et al., 2025).

AMPARO Advocacy uses the CALD acronym within this document as a practical bridge to existing policy and data settings. In practice, engagement should always follow the language a person or community actually uses for themselves, their culture and their identity – CALD is a category for planning and reporting, not a label to apply to people in the room.

AMPARO Advocacy expects to revisit this terminology as this Framework is reviewed and updated over time, in conversation with the communities it serves as a Peak and Representative body in Queensland.

2.0 PURPOSE & SCOPE

2.1 Purpose

This Framework has been co-designed with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with disability and family members. It is intended for government agencies and partner organisations who plan, fund or deliver engagement with CALD communities.

Participants told us they want this Framework to help create:

- “Equal access and equal services – people from CALD backgrounds with disability not being left behind or offered “less”.
- “Real influence, not lip service – their voices being heard, respected and acted upon.”
- “Clear, accessible information so people know their rights, understand complex systems and can make informed decisions.”
- “Safe, culturally responsive engagement where people feel welcome, not judged, and do not have to repeatedly re-live trauma.”
- “Stronger accountability so that engagement leads to visible action, rather than promises that quietly disappear.”

This Framework brings together those expectations into a practical Framework of principles, examples, and tools to guide respectful engagement with people from CALD communities across government and the disability sector.

These patterns contribute to unequal access to information and services, and to a loss of trust in government and service systems.

This Framework exists to change that. It sets out a shared Framework so that engagement with people from CALD communities with disability is:

- “planned, not tokenistic”
- “safe, respectful and not hurried”
- “accessible and culturally responsive, rather than relying on “one size fits all” methods”
- “accountable, with clear follow-up and visible action.”

It is one way of responding to what people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families have clearly asked for – engagement that leads to better, fairer decisions and services.



2.2 Why This Framework Exists

Despite many engagement activities across government and the disability sector, people from CALD backgrounds with disability told us that they are still too often:

- “Invited into consultations late in the process, when key decisions have already been made.”
- “spoken to in complex or technical language, without interpreters or time to check understanding”
- “treated as a “tick box” for diversity, rather than partners whose experience can shape better solutions”
- “left without feedback, not knowing what happened to the information they shared”
- “re-exposed to trauma when asked to retell distressing experiences without proper care and support.”



The Framework is not a script.

It is a shared resource, grounded in co-design, that should be adapted with local communities and updated over time as we learn what works best.



3.0 AUDIENCE

Who This Framework Is For And How To Use It

This Framework is intended for anyone who plans, funds, commissions or delivers engagement with people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families.

It will be most relevant for:

- Government agencies and statutory bodies that design consultations, advisory groups, policy development processes and service reforms.
- Funded service providers and partner organisations who are asked to engage with people from CALD communities on behalf of government.
- Engagement, consultation and communications staff, including project officers, policy officers and community engagement workers.
- Bicultural and peer workers, interpreters and community leaders who play a key role in supporting people from CALD backgrounds to participate.

Different people will use this Framework in different ways:

- Leaders and managers can use it to set expectations, allocate time and resources, and hold teams accountable for safe, inclusive engagement.
- Project and policy staff can use it when planning engagement activities - as a checklist to make sure they have considered access, cultural safety, trauma-informed practice and follow-up.
- Facilitators and front-line workers can use it as a practical guide when preparing for and running consultations, focus groups and interviews.

[Download the Resource Pack →](#)

4.0 WHAT INFORMS THIS FRAMEWORK

This Framework is informed by a range of evidence sources, including national and state disability policies, engagement frameworks, Disability Royal Commission research, multicultural policy frameworks, human rights obligations and contemporary research on culturally responsive engagement. Together, these sources reinforce the need for engagement that is inclusive, accessible, culturally safe and accountable.

National disability strategies and engagement frameworks

- **Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 and its Engagement Plan**, which call for inclusive, barrier-free participation of people with disability in policy, program and service design, and the development of good practice guidelines for engagement with people with disability.
- **The NDIA Engagement Framework**, which sets out how the NDIA will listen to, understand and respond to people with disability to improve the NDIS.
- **The NDIS Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD) Strategy 2024–2028 and its Action Plan**, which commit the NDIA to co-designed definitions of cultural safety and culturally responsive services, and to improving access, participation and outcomes for CALD participants.
- **NDIS legislative reform** which has followed the Independent Review into the NDIS and includes reforms to Scheme access, planning and participant protections – reinforcing the need for engagement with CALD participants that is accessible and culturally safe as these changes are implemented. To date NDIS legislative reform includes those amendments to the National Disability Insurance Act 2013 from the:
 - **National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) Act 2024**

- **National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Integrity and Safeguarding) Act 2026**
- **National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment (Securing the NDIS for Future Generations) Act 2026.**

At a Queensland level, this Framework is also informed by:

- **Queensland's Disability Plan 2022–2027: Together, a better Queensland**, which tailors Australia's Disability Strategy to Queensland's diverse communities and regions, and emphasises inclusive communities, accessible services and co-designed solutions with people with disability.
- **The Queensland Disability Stakeholder Engagement and Co-design Strategy**, which sets out how Queenslanders with disability, their families, First Nations communities, CALD communities and the disability sector will be involved in designing, testing and implementing major disability reforms, including those related to the Disability Royal Commission and the Independent Review into the NDIS.
- **Queensland Government guidance**, including the **Queensland Government Accessible Events Guide**, provides practical steps for planning and delivering accessible and inclusive events, supporting people with disability to participate on an equal basis with others.
- **The Queensland Language Services Policy and the related Queensland Language Services Guidelines** which outlines the Queensland Government's commitment to use interpreters and translated information to improve access to the full range of government and government-funded services for people who have difficulty communicating in English.





Disability Royal Commission evidence and CALD-specific research

- Findings and recommendations from the Disability Royal Commission, particularly those that call for inclusive, accessible, culturally safe engagement and improved access to services for people from CALD backgrounds.
- Research commissioned by the Disability Royal Commission on best-practice access to services for people from CALD backgrounds with disability, which highlights barriers (such as language, racism and complex systems) and outlines service and engagement practices that work.
- Sector reports and advocacy from organisations working with CALD communities and people with disability (for example, AMPARO Advocacy's work on CALD access to the NDIS), which document inequities and propose practical responses.

Queensland policy and multicultural frameworks

- The **Multicultural Recognition Act 2016 (the Act)** was introduced to ensure services provided by government entities are responsive to the diversity of the people of Queensland by providing for a multicultural policy and action plan.
- The **Multicultural Queensland Charter**, which was enshrined in the Act, sets out principles for a unified, inclusive and culturally diverse Queensland, including the importance of respectful and inclusive engagement between communities and government.
- The **Queensland Multicultural Policy – Our story, our**

future – and successive **Queensland Multicultural Action Plans**, focus on culturally responsive government (including a requirement for government agencies to provide services which are accessible to people who have difficulty communicating in English), inclusive, harmonious and united communities and economic opportunities.

- Queensland Government multicultural and inclusion strategies in areas such as education, housing and human services, which emphasise culturally responsive service delivery and meaningful engagement with CALD stakeholders.

Human rights and anti-discrimination frameworks

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which affirms the right of people with disability to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives, on an equal basis with others.
- **Australian and Queensland anti-discrimination and human rights laws**, which require public authorities and funded services to act compatibly with human rights and to take reasonable steps to avoid discrimination, including discrimination based on race, ethnicity, language and disability.

Together, these sources reinforce what co-design participants have said very clearly – engagement with people from CALD backgrounds with disability must be safe, equitable, culturally responsive and accountable – and it must lead to real change, not tokenistic consultation.

5.0 HOW THIS FRAMEWORK WAS DEVELOPED

AMPARO Advocacy led the co-design of this Framework through workshops held in 2025-26 with people from CALD backgrounds with disability and family members. The process drew on the expertise of AMPARO's CALD Inclusion Consultants and Inclusive Leadership Network members, who have lived experience of disability and are trained to support and facilitate co-design processes. The purpose of this process was to ensure the Framework reflected lived experience, community priorities and practical insights about what makes engagement inclusive, culturally safe and effective.

Who was involved

Workshop participants represented diverse cultural and language communities and included people with a range of disability types as well as family members.

The workshops were facilitated to ensure that language was not a barrier to participation. Sessions were held in an accessible venue and online, and participants were reimbursed for their time and expertise in line with the Framework's principles.

What we explored together

Each workshop gave participants the opportunity to share their experiences of engaging with government and services - what had worked well, what had felt unsafe, tokenistic or exclusionary, and what they hoped engagement could look like in the future. Together, we explored:

- what good and poor engagement felt like from their own experience;
- the barriers that most commonly prevented people from CALD backgrounds with disability from participating;
- the principles, practices and conditions that would make engagement safe, respectful and meaningful; and
- what accountability should look like - how they would know if engagement had led to real change.

How this shaped the Framework

Participants' stories, reflections and aspirations are the primary foundation of this Framework. Their voices are present throughout - in the guiding principles, in the descriptions of what good and poor engagement feel like, in the practical tools and examples, and in the accountability and governance expectations. The Framework does not claim to represent every CALD community; rather, it reflects the themes that emerged strongly and consistently across the co-design process, grounded in the shared experience of people who are too often left out of decisions that affect their lives.

A draft of the Framework was reviewed and validated with participants for feedback before finalisation, to ensure it accurately captured what people had shared and remained true to the intent of the co-design process.



6.0 UNDERSTANDING



Understanding CALD Communities and Disability

People from CALD backgrounds with disability are not a single group. They come from many different countries, cultures, faiths and language groups, with diverse migration pathways (including humanitarian, family reunion, skilled and student visas), and live in metropolitan, regional and rural areas. Experiences of disability are also diverse – including physical and sensory disability, cognitive and intellectual disability, psychosocial disability and chronic health conditions – and are understood in different ways across cultures and families.

Disability, culture and other factors intersect. A person's experience of engagement will be shaped not only by their culture and language, but also by gender, age, faith, sexuality, visa or residency status, caring responsibilities, socio-economic status and where they live. For example, a woman from a refugee background with psychosocial disability living in regional Queensland may experience different barriers than a man with physical disability on a skilled migrant visa in an inner-city area. This Framework aims to support engagement that recognises and responds to these intersecting factors, rather than treating, "people from CALD backgrounds with disability" as a homogenous category.



“Experiences of disability are diverse, and are understood in different ways across cultures and families.”



6.1 Common Barriers to Engagement

Co-design participants and research highlight a range of barriers that can prevent people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families from participating in engagement or make participation unsafe or tokenistic.

These include:

- **Language and communication barriers** - limited access to certified interpreters (especially face-to-face); information that is only in written English, or use of jargon and technical terms that are difficult to understand.
- **Low trust and safety concerns** - past negative experiences with services or government, fear that information will be used against them (for example, affecting visas or income support), or fear of being judged or disbelieved.
- **Limited knowledge of services and systems** - not knowing what government agencies do, how decisions are made, what rights people have, or how engagement processes connect to real outcomes.

- **Stigma and shame** - cultural stigma about disability and mental health, or family/community pressure not to “speak out”, which can make it hard to share experiences openly.
- **Practical and accessibility barriers** - inaccessible venues or online platforms, lack of transport or childcare, timing that clashes with work, care or religious commitments, and not being paid or compensated for people’s time and expertise.
- **Racism and discrimination** - experiences of racism, colourism, stereotyping or being treated as less capable or less deserving because of language, accent, skin colour, visa status or religion.

6.2 Strengths and Assets of CALD Communities

While people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families face significant barriers, they also bring many strengths, resources and forms of expertise that should shape how engagement is designed. Many CALD communities have:



- **Strong social and family networks** - extended family, community and faith-based connections that provide practical support, information and care.
- **Community leadership and advocacy skills** - community elders, faith leaders, peer leaders and advocates who already organise, support others and build bridges with services.
- **Bicultural and multilingual capability** - people who move between languages and cultures every day, and who can help translate not just words but meanings, systems and expectations.
- **Resilience and creativity** - lived experience of migration, displacement, discrimination and rebuilding life in a new country, which often brings strong problem-solving skills and determination.
- **Deep knowledge of gaps and solutions** - clear insight into what is not working in services and systems, and practical ideas about what would make engagement and support more accessible, respectful and effective.

Effective engagement with CALD communities is not only about “reducing barriers”. It is also about recognising, valuing and partnering with these strengths – for example, by working with CALD-led organisations and peer leaders, supporting bicultural roles, and creating spaces where people from CALD backgrounds with disability can lead conversations and make decisions about matters that affect their lives.

Understanding these diverse experiences and barriers is essential to designing engagement that is safe, respectful and effective. The principles and practical tools in the following sections are intended to help government agencies and partners respond to this complexity, rather than relying on “one size fits all” approaches.

[Download the Resource Pack →](#)

7.0 WHAT GOOD AND POOR ENGAGEMENT FEEL LIKE

From CALD Lived Experience

People from CALD backgrounds with disability and family members did not talk about engagement only as a process or a checklist – they described what it feels like when it is done well, and when it is not.

These feelings are the heart of this Framework. The guiding principles and tools that follow are there to help organisations create more of the “good” experiences and avoid the “poor” ones.

Aspect	When Engagement Feels Good	When Engagement Feels Poor or Harmful
Being Heard	Being listened to – I can tell my story without being rushed, interrupted or talked over.	Not being heard – people talk over me, correct me, or show “0% patience” when I try to explain.
Respect and Safety	Being respected – I am treated as a person who matters, not a problem to be fixed or a box to tick. Feeling safe – I feel welcome in the space, I know why I am here, and I do not feel judged or exposed.	Being judged or stereotyped – I feel treated as less important, less capable or less deserving because of my language, accent, skin colour, visa status, culture, faith or disability. Being unsafe or exposed – I am asked to share painful experiences without enough care, support or privacy, and I worry how my information will be used.
Understanding and Communication	Clear, understandable information – things are explained in plain English, and I can ask questions or say, “I don’t understand”. Support to communicate – I can use my first language with an interpreter if I need to, and there is enough time for back-and-forth conversation.	No support to understand – there is no interpreter (or not enough time with one), the language is full of jargon, and I leave more confused than when I arrived.
Choice and Control	Choice and control – I can decide what I want to share, I can say no, and I can take a break if I need to.	Feeling pressured to answer everything, even when I don’t want to” if the group agrees.
Trust and Follow-Through	Follow-through – I see or hear how my input has been used, and I feel that my time and experience have made a difference.	Tokenism – I am invited to “have my say”, but decisions have already been made, or nothing changes afterwards. No feedback or closure – I never hear back, I do not know what happened with what I shared, and I feel used.





8.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

For engaging people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families

These guiding principles set the standard for respectful, culturally safe, and effective engagement. They draw on national and state-level Frameworks such as the NDIS CALD Strategy 2024–2028, Australia’s Disability Strategy guiding principles, Queensland Disability Stakeholder Engagement and Co-Design Strategy – and, critically, on the voices and lived experience shared in the CALD co-design workshops held in 2025.

Engagement should be experienced as safe, welcoming and useful – not rushed, tokenistic or extractive. The principles below are intended to be used together, as a connected set.

8.1 Co-design and shared decision-making

Why it matters

Participants were clear that they do not want to be consulted at the end of a process as a “tick box”. They want to be involved from the start, with real influence over how problems are defined, solutions are designed and decisions are made.

What it means in practice:

- Involve people from CALD backgrounds with disability, and families, in shaping the questions, not just answering them.
- Co-design engagement approaches with CALD communities, rather than importing pre-set methods.
- Be transparent about what is up for change and where there are constraints, so people are not misled about their level of influence.
- Recognise lived experience as expertise: pay people for their time and acknowledge their contributions publicly (with consent).

8.2 Understanding and empathy over efficiency

Why it matters

People want sincerity, patience, and real understanding – not a process that feels rushed.

Participants with lived experience stressed that feeling heard, respected and supported was more important than speed or throughput. They described good engagement as taking time to listen, explain, check understanding and follow through – and poor engagement as rushed, impatient and focused on “getting through the questions”.

What it means in practice:

- Take time to listen without rushing or interrupting, especially when English is a second language.
- Build relationships before seeking information; start with welcome, introductions and context.
- Offer continuity of contact and follow-up, rather than “one-off” visits or calls.
- Value the person’s story beyond their “case” or “issue”; avoid treating people as a number or a problem to be solved quickly.

8.3 Cultural safety and humility

Why it matters

Participants described cultural safety as not being judged, not having to repeatedly disclose trauma, and being treated as a person who matters. Cultural safety is undermined when people are stereotyped based on race, visa status or English level, when spaces feel unwelcoming, or when facilitators show “0% patience”.

What it means in practice:

- Approach each person with respect, openness and curiosity, avoiding assumptions about beliefs, culture or background.
- Ensure facilitators reflect diversity, including both men and women, to support comfort across different genders and cultures.
- Offer a choice of gender-matched interpreter or facilitator where cultural or religious norms call for this, rather than assuming a mixed-gender team will be comfortable for everyone.
- Avoid culturally insensitive jokes, comments or “small talk” that rely on stereotypes.
- Check preferences before initiating a handshake or other physical greeting across genders, and do not read reduced eye contact as disengagement or disrespect – norms vary.
- Use appropriate titles or forms of address, particularly with elders or community leaders, until invited to do otherwise.
- Choose venues and formats that feel culturally safe – for example, community centres, faith-based spaces or other trusted local settings, rather than government offices where possible.
- Consider the family and community context of cultural groups and tailor formats accordingly. For example, decision-making or health recovery in certain cultures heavily involves extended family or community elders rather than just an individual so it may be appropriate to include a broad range of representatives from a cultural group.
- Build knowledge about the communities you are

engaging with, including their histories, values and experiences of services – but do not demand personal details or trauma unless strictly necessary and consented to.

- Be mindful of who else is present when disability is discussed, as it may be a sensitive or stigmatised topic in some cultural contexts, and follow the person’s own preferred language rather than clinical or deficit framing.
- Explicitly name and challenge racism, colourism and discrimination when they arise.

Culturally unsafe practices to avoid

- Focusing heavily on visa history or how a person came to Australia instead of why they are there that day.
- Making assumptions about what someone believes or needs because of their country of origin, skin colour or accent.
- Not listening, talking over people or dismissing their experience (“That’s not the case”) – practices that signal “you are not seen and not welcome”.

8.4 Accessibility and Inclusion (physical, communication, information)

Why it matters

Engagement fails if people cannot access it or understand it. Participants highlighted language and communication, physical accessibility, digital exclusion, and the lack of practical support (transport, childcare, reimbursement) as major barriers – alongside the need for information in plain language, no jargon.

What it means in practice:

- Provide certified interpreters (preferably face-to-face where possible) and translated materials in plain language, allowing enough time for interpreted conversations.
- Offer Easy Read, pictorial and other accessible formats where needed.
- Ensure venues are physically accessible and sensory-friendly.
- Support participation with transport, childcare and financial recognition or vouchers where appropriate.
- Give people information ahead of time about the purpose, agenda and what will be asked, so they can prepare and decide how they want to participate.
- Be sensitive to how individuals prefer to communicate – e.g. allowing thinking time, checking understanding gently, and avoiding pressure to speak in front of large groups.



8.5 Trauma-informed and person-centred practice

Why it matters

Many people from CALD backgrounds with disability have experienced trauma, including war, displacement, discrimination, family violence and service system harm. Participants said they shut down in unsafe environments, especially when asked many probing questions or when their stories are treated as “content” rather than deeply personal.

What it means in practice

- Respect boundaries – do not push for details people are not comfortable sharing; avoid repeated retelling of traumatic experiences.
- Use open-ended, non-judgemental questions and give people time to respond.
- Be attentive to body language and other signs of distress or fatigue.
- Make confidentiality and privacy explicit – explain how information will be used, who will see it, and where it will be stored.
- Normalise pausing, breaks and “passing” on questions.
- If someone becomes distressed, acknowledge it gently and offer options, for example: “It seems we may have stepped on a sensitive topic – would you like to take a break?” Offer tissues, water and quiet space, and give the person time before proceeding.

8.6 Representation and inclusion

Why it matters

Many groups are consistently excluded from engagement – including women, refugees, people on temporary visas, those with low English or digital literacy, those outside formal systems like the NDIS, and people without strong family or community networks. People with psychosocial disability, intellectual disability or cognitive impairment are also frequently underrepresented, often facing additional barriers to participation such as complex communication needs, fluctuating capacity, and engagement processes that are not designed to be accessible to them. Participants stressed that these are often the people who most need to be heard.

What it means in practice:

- Intentionally seek out voices that “fall through the cracks” – not only those already connected to services or advisory groups.
- Use peer networks, community connectors and leaders from within communities to reach people who are isolated or distrustful of government.
- Ensure diversity across cultural groups, disability types, gender, age, visa and residency status and geography.
- Consider specific strategies to hear from women, sole parents, people without digital access, and people who have self-isolated due to shame or stigma.

8.7 Tailored engagement methods

Why it matters

One-size-fits-all engagement does not work. Participants described strong preferences for face-to-face, relational engagement in trusted places, and caution about online or highly formal processes.

What it means in practice:

- Adapt methods to each community and participant group - do not assume the same approach will work everywhere.
- Prioritise face-to-face engagement in trusted community spaces (schools, community centres, faith-based settings, libraries) over purely digital or institutional formats, wherever possible.
- Some community groups are less comfortable meeting in public spaces due to stigma surrounding disability and mental health issues and will prefer to meet privately one on one.
- Use culturally relevant tools such as storytelling, visual aids, multilingual facilitation and small-group or one-to-one conversations.
- Be flexible about meeting times and formats to fit around work, caring and religious commitments. Respect cultural holidays, prayer times, dress standards, and food restrictions (such as halal or kosher needs).
- Where engagement takes place on community or religious premises, follow the host community's lead on protocols such as removing shoes, appropriate dress or seating arrangements, rather than imposing standard office conventions.
- Where appropriate, seek an introduction through a trusted community or religious leader rather than approaching individuals directly, recognising their role as trusted gatekeepers within the community.



8.8 Transparency, trust and ongoing relationships

Why it matters

Trust was strengthened when people knew why they were being engaged, how their input would be used, and saw follow-through. Trust was broken when confidentiality was breached, when there was no feedback, or when engagement led to no visible change - leaving people feeling “used”.

What it means in practice:

- Clearly explain the purpose of engagement, the decisions being informed, what will happen with the information, and any limits of confidentiality.
- Explicitly check whether note-taking, recording or photography is acceptable, as comfort with this varies culturally and some communities have specific protocols around the use of personal images or stories.
- Avoid hidden agendas or tokenistic invitations - be honest if something is a requirement but has limited scope for change.
- Share outcomes and demonstrate, in concrete terms, how feedback has influenced decisions or implementation.
- Provide specific feedback to participants (not generic reports), including opportunities to correct or refine drafts before final approval.
- Commit to ongoing relationships where appropriate - for example, by inviting participants to future stages of co-design, or to leadership and advisory roles.
- Do not make false promises, break confidentiality or disappear after extracting information; these practices cause harm and deepen mistrust.





9.0 GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

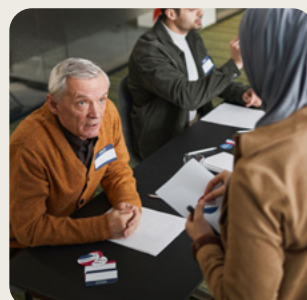
This Framework sets out AMPARO's recommended approach to engaging with people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families. While it isn't Government policy, it reflects sector views of best practice. Government agencies, partner organisations and funded services are encouraged to adopt it as their approach to engagement. Proposed governance and accountability measures below help partners embed, monitor and continuously improve how they put this into practice.

[Download the Resource Pack →](#)

Leadership commitment

Leaders in government and funded organisations are encouraged to play a key role in making this Framework real, by:

- Endorsing and supporting this Framework as a model of best practice for engagement with people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families.
- Resourcing engagement activities properly - including time, interpreters, translations, accessible venues, community partnerships, and recognition of people's lived experience.
- Embedding the guiding principles and engagement cycle in relevant policies, procedures, project briefs and funding agreements.
- Modelling the values in this Framework - including cultural safety, respect, transparency and a willingness to learn from feedback and mistakes.



**“Leaders in government
and funded organisations
have a key role in making
this Framework real.”**



9.1 Roles

Different parts of the system are encouraged to apply this Framework in the following way:

Queensland Government agencies and commissioning bodies

- Apply this Framework to disability-related engagement activities that involve CALD communities, including policy, program and service design and evaluation.
- Build expectations into procurement, contracts and funding agreements so that funded organisations and consultants follow and implement this Framework when engaging CALD communities.
- Provide opportunities for CALD-led organisations and people with lived experience of CALD and disability to participate in governance, advisory and leadership roles, not just consultation activities.

Partner and funded organisations

- Use this Framework when they are designing and delivering engagement on behalf of government or as part of funded programs.
- Work in partnership with CALD communities, bicultural workers and peer leaders to ensure engagement with people from CALD backgrounds with disability is culturally safe, accessible and trauma informed.
- Ensure their own internal policies (for example, community engagement, complaints, quality improvement) reflect the principles and minimum standards set out in this Framework.

CALD community organisations, leaders and people with lived experience

- Contribute their expertise in co-designing disability engagement approaches, identifying barriers and solutions, and advising on what safe and respectful practice looks like.
- Provide feedback on how well this Framework is being implemented in practice, and what needs to change.
- Participate in leadership, advisory and governance structures where safe, supported and appropriately resourced to do so.



[Download the Resource Pack →](#)



9.2 Minimum standards and monitoring

The guiding principles and “at a glance” checklist in this Framework form the minimum standard for engagement with people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families. Each agency or project using this Framework should:

- Nominate a person or team responsible for applying the Framework to their engagement work.
- Document, at the start of each engagement activity, how they will meet the principles and minimum standards (for example, in a short engagement plan using the template in the Tools section).
- Monitor a small set of key indicators, such as:
 - i. whether interpreters and accessible formats were offered and used
 - ii. which CALD communities and groups were engaged (and who was missing)
 - iii. what actions or changes resulted from the engagement
 - iv. whether participants received feedback about what happened with their input.

Use this information to report internally (and, where relevant, to the Disability Engagement and Co-design Hub) on how engagement with CALD communities is occurring and how it is improving over time.

9.3 Responding to concerns and learning from them

There will be times when engagement does not meet the principles and standards in this Framework, or when harm is caused despite good intentions.

Organisations using this Framework commit to:

- Making it clear how people can raise concerns or complaints about engagement processes - including accessible options for people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families.
- Taking all concerns seriously, responding in a timely way, and, where appropriate, apologising and making changes to prevent similar issues in future.
- Treating feedback and complaints as opportunities for learning and improvement, and sharing key lessons with CALD partners, advisory groups and the Disability Engagement and Co-design Hub.

Together, these governance and accountability arrangements are intended to ensure that the Framework leads to real changes in practice, not just a new document - and that people from CALD backgrounds with disability can see their experiences and feedback shaping the way engagement is planned, delivered and improved.

Part B

CALD Engagement Cycle

The CALD engagement cycle turns the guiding principles in Part A into practical steps for planning and delivering engagement with people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families. It has four stages –

I) PREPARE

II) DESIGN

III) DELIVER

IV) CLOSE THE LOOP

In practice, these stages often overlap and repeat, but together they provide a simple Framework to follow - understanding communities and partnering with CALD leaders, co-designing methods and settings, facilitating engagement safely and respectfully, and then feeding back, acting on what was heard and improving over time.

At every stage, the cycle is grounded in the guiding principles and in what good and harmful engagement feel like from the perspective of CALD communities.



Decision-rights and influence matrix (required)

For each engagement activity, agencies/organisations should complete a short decision-rights and influence matrix (see Part C – Tools) before inviting participants. This matrix makes clear the purpose of the engagement, what is open to influence, what is fixed, who will make decisions, and how/when feedback will be provided to participants. The matrix should be shared in accessible form with participants at the start of the engagement.

When completing the matrix, teams must also clearly state the proposed outcomes of the engagement and what these outcomes will mean for participants and/or other CALD people with disability.

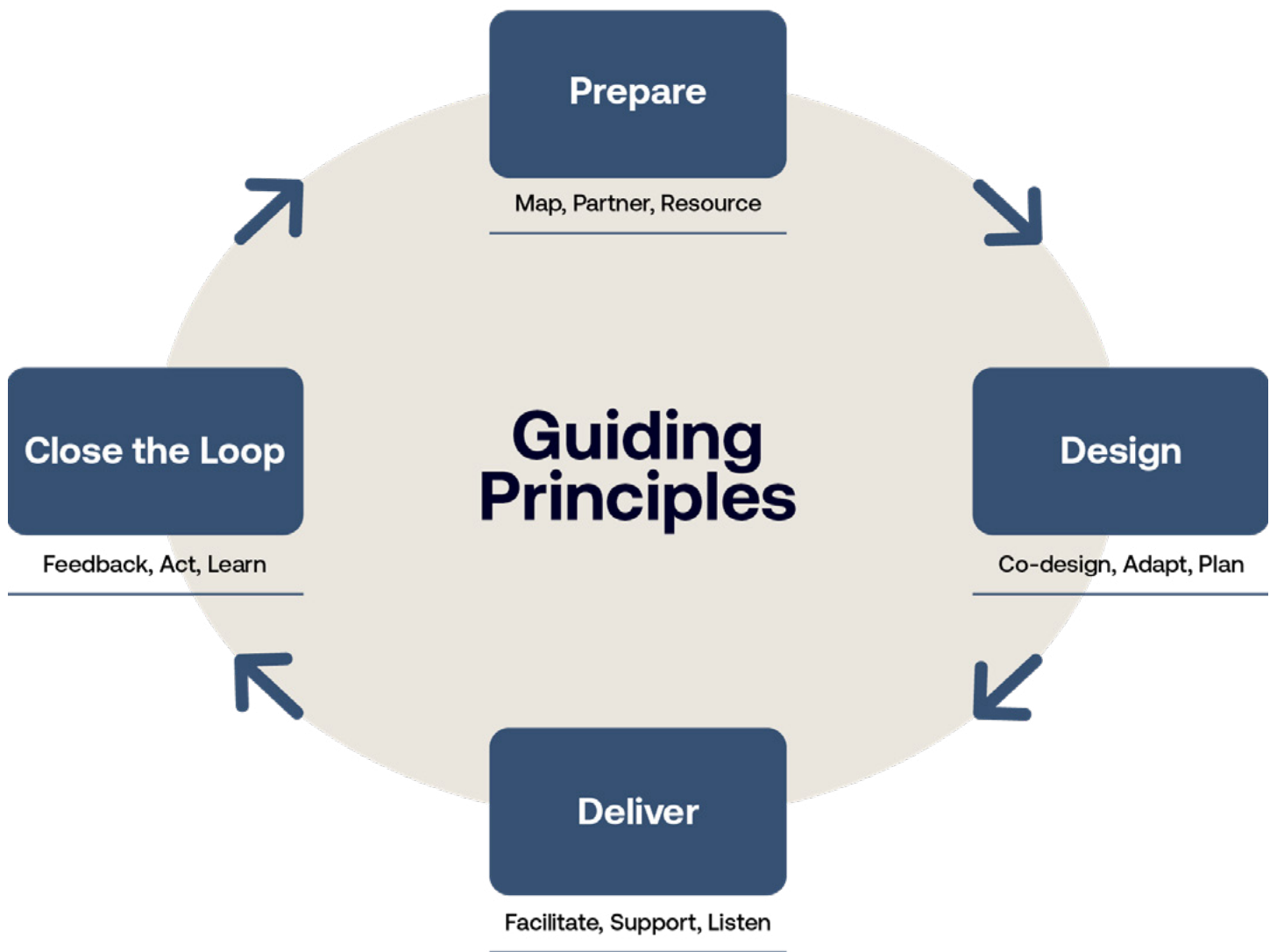


Figure 1: CALD engagement cycle – Prepare, Design, Deliver and Close the loop, all grounded in the guiding principles and lived experience of people from CALD backgrounds with disability and families.





10.0 PREPARE FOR ENGAGEMENT

10.1 Know your communities

Know your community – mapping local CALD demographics and networks.

10.2 Partner with CALD leaders and organisations

Partnerships - working with CALD community leaders and organisations.

10.3 Resource engagement properly

Resourcing - budgeting for interpreters, bicultural workers, translations, accessible venues, cultural supports.

10.4 Build cultural and disability capability

Cultural capability - training for staff in cultural responsiveness, disability awareness, and inclusive practice.

11.0 DESIGN ENGAGEMENT

11.1 Design communication and information

- Engagement of interpreters and translators.
- Engaging bicultural workers to identify potential co-designers/ participants and supporting their involvement.
- Multilingual materials in plain language.
- Easy Read and accessible formats.
- Culturally appropriate images and examples.
- Provide information at least a few days before the session (agenda, purpose, what will be asked, and what decisions it will inform), in accessible formats/ languages.
- Provide reasonable notice of engagement sessions and any changes/cancellations.
- Ensure participants have a clear and fair way to cancel or reschedule (including late notice due to disability/ health/caring) without penalty.



11.2 Choose settings and formats with communities

- Meeting people where they are (community spaces, faith-based settings).
- Providing childcare, transport, and refreshments.
- Flexible engagement times.

11.3 Inclusive co-design with CALD communities

- Why co-design matters – better solutions, stronger ownership.
- Steps in inclusive co-design – from idea generation to validation.
- Adapting co-design methods – visual tools, storytelling, multilingual facilitation.
- Ensuring equal voice – strategies to reduce power imbalances.

11.4 Design with families and key supporters

- Understanding family roles in different cultures.
- Supporting informed decision-making for the person with disability.
- Respecting cultural approaches to disability and care.



12.0 DELIVER ENGAGEMENT

How to use this section

- **Must do** = minimum standard (required for all engagement under this Framework)
- **Should do** = good practice (expected unless there is a clear reason not to)
- **Consider** = optional/context-specific strategies to improve quality and inclusion

12.1 Facilitate safely and respectfully

Must do (minimum standard)

- Begin by clearly explaining the purpose of the session, how information will be used, who is in the room, and any limits of confidentiality.
- Create a respectful group environment by setting simple ground rules (e.g. one person speaks at a time, no interrupting, respect different experiences, confidentiality where applicable).
- Facilitate at a pace that allows people to think, ask questions, and respond in their own words (especially where interpreters are used or English is a second language).
- Do not rush people. Build in pauses and allow people to finish their thoughts without interruption (including when stories are emotional or painful).
- Demonstrate sincerity and respect through tone and body language (e.g. no impatience cues; no “moving on” while someone is still speaking).
- If a participant shares a painful story, do not assume something is “wrong” with them; respond with respect, offer choice (pause/break), and let them share on their terms.
- Treat all participants as experts in their own lived experience; do not dismiss, correct, or minimise people’s experiences.
- Monitor the room for signs of discomfort, exclusion, or disrespect and respond promptly.

Should do (good practice)

- Start with a warm welcome, introductions, and a brief relationship-building activity/check-in before moving into formal questions.
- Use plain language and avoid jargon, acronyms, and policy terms unless they are explained clearly.
- Where appropriate, use bicultural facilitators/co-facilitators who reflect participant diversity (including gender diversity) to support comfort and cultural safety.

- Build in pauses and check-ins (e.g. “Does this make sense?” / “Would you like me to explain that another way?”).
- Acknowledge and address any stereotyping, racism, or culturally unsafe behaviour immediately and respectfully.

Consider (contextual)

- Holding the session in a trusted community setting (rather than a government office) if this improves safety and participation.
- Using visual aids, story prompts, or examples to support understanding.
- Offering separate or smaller group discussions (e.g. by language, gender, age cohort, or support needs) where this may improve comfort and equal participation.





12.2 Engage interpreters and communication supports well

This section should be read in conjunction with the **Queensland Language Services Policy** and the Queensland Language Services Guidelines.

Must do (minimum standard)

- Offer National Accreditation Authority of Interpreter and Translators (NAATI) certified interpreters where needed; do not rely on children or family members to interpret in systemic engagement.
- Build in double or triple time when interpreters are involved (planning, session length, and decision-making timeframes), so participants are not rushed and can ask questions.
- Brief interpreters before the session on purpose, topic, role boundaries, and confidentiality expectations.
- Speak in short segments and pause regularly for interpretation.
- Address the participant directly (not the interpreter), and check understanding throughout.
- Ensure sufficient time is allocated for interpreted discussion (do not rush or shorten participation because interpretation takes longer).
- Do not assume a “yes” means understanding. Check understanding using plain language and “check-back” (e.g. “Just to check I explained it clearly; can you tell me in your own words what you think this means?”).

Should do (good practice)

- Provide interpreters with session materials in advance where possible (agenda, key terms, purpose statement).
- Use the same interpreter across sessions where possible, as continuity builds trust and understanding (where practical and appropriate).
- Offer participants a choice of interpreter gender where possible for sensitive topics.
- Combine interpreter support with other accessible communication methods (plain language, visuals, Easy Read, written summaries, breaks, repetition).
- Offer participants a clear, respectful way to say, “I don’t understand” (e.g. normalise it in the opening script: “It’s OK to say you don’t understand; that helps us do this properly.”)
- Use face-to-face interpreters for complex, sensitive, or trust-dependent engagement.
- Engage bilingual/bicultural co-facilitators (in addition to interpreters) to support cultural bridging and fuller participation.

Consider (contextual)

Offering one-to-one interpreter-supported conversations for participants who are uncomfortable speaking in groups.

12.3 Work in a trauma-informed, person-centred way

Must do (minimum standard)

- Make clear that participants can choose what to share, can decline to answer questions, and can take a break or leave at any time.
- Do not pressure people to disclose traumatic experiences or personal details beyond what is needed for the engagement purpose.
- Explain privacy and information use clearly before discussion begins (including notetaking/recording arrangements, de-identification, and who will see the information).
- Watch for signs of distress, fatigue, or overwhelm and respond supportively (pause, offer break, check options).
- If distress occurs, respond calmly and respectfully and provide immediate options (e.g. pause, quiet space, support person, reschedule).

Should do (good practice)

- Use open-ended, non-judgemental questions and avoid repeated probing.
- Sequence topics from less sensitive to more sensitive where possible.
- Provide a clear support contact or follow-up option after the session (especially where difficult topics are discussed).
- Normalise “passing” on questions and remind participants of this option during the session, not only at the start.

Consider (contextual)

- Offering separate trauma-sensitive pathways (e.g. individual interview instead of group session) for topics likely to involve distressing experiences.
- Having a designated support person available during longer or more sensitive sessions.
- Providing translated or accessible written information after the session summarising support options and next steps.

12.4 Ensure equal voice in the room

Must do (minimum standard)

- Facilitation must actively support participation from people who may be quieter, less confident, less fluent in English, or less familiar with formal engagement processes.
- Manage power imbalances so that professionals,

service staff, or dominant speakers do not crowd out lived-experience voices.

- Provide multiple ways to contribute (e.g. speaking, writing, visual responses, one-to-one follow-up, interpreter-supported input).
- Check who is not participating and adapt facilitation in the moment where possible.
- Actively watch for and address bias (e.g. assumptions based on accent/language/culture). If a participant appears dismissed or judged, pause and reset the process (e.g. re-state ground rules, reframe questions, ensure equal voice).

Should do (good practice)

- Use structured turn-taking, small groups, or paired discussion before full-group sharing.
- Invite contribution in non-pressuring ways (e.g. “Would you like to add anything?” rather than putting someone on the spot).
- Separate professional/agency discussion from lived experience sharing where mixed groups risk silencing participants.
- Build in extra time for participants using interpreters or communication supports to contribute fully.

Consider (contextual)

- Running dedicated sessions for cohorts who may be less likely to speak openly in mixed groups (e.g. women, young people, people with psychosocial/intellectual disability, people with low literacy, family members separately from service providers).
- Using anonymous or low-pressure feedback methods (sticky notes, translated forms, post-session phone follow-up).
- Returning for a second session to validate and deepen input from participants who needed more time to build trust.



13.0 CLOSING THE LOOP AND IMPROVEMENT



13.1 Feedback to participants and communities

Must do (minimum standard)

- Provide feedback to participants and/or communities that clearly explains:
 - I. what changed because of the engagement
 - II. what did not change and why (e.g. law, budget, scope, timing)
 - III. where the process is at and what happens next (including timelines)
 - IV. how participants can stay involved (if appropriate)
- Provide feedback in accessible formats and languages (e.g. plain English summary, interpreter-supported verbal update, translated/Easy Read versions where required).
- Provide feedback within a reasonable timeframe (recommended 4–6 weeks, or sooner once key outcomes are confirmed).

Should do (good practice)

- Review the 'Practice guidance: how organisations should report back after engagement' tool in Part C tools.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to correct misunderstandings or refine wording before final decisions, where practical.

13.2 Maintain relationships, not just projects

- “Commit to ongoing relationships, not one-off consultations.”
- Link to leadership pathways (ILN, advisory groups) where appropriate.

13.3 Evaluate and learn

Evaluation should assess not only whether engagement occurred, but whether it was accessible, safe, meaningful, and influential. Agencies and organisations should use a simple evaluation approach that captures three areas:

1. Access and inclusion (who could take part and what supports made participation possible)
2. Quality and safety of engagement (how the engagement was experienced)
3. Influence and follow-through (what changed and how feedback was closed out)

A - Access and Inclusion (process measures)

These indicators help assess whether engagement was practically and culturally accessible.

Suggested indicators

- Number of participants and participant groups engaged (including communities represented and who was missing)
- Interpreters offered / used (including language needs met or unmet)
- Accessible formats offered / used (e.g. Easy Read, visual supports, translated information)
- Venue and format accessibility (physical access, sensory considerations, online access)
- Practical supports offered / used (transport, childcare, reimbursement/payment, support person)
- Participation methods used (group, individual, online, face-to-face, written, visual)

Key Reflection Questions

1. Who participated, and who did not?
2. What barriers were reduced successfully?
3. What access needs were identified too late or not met?



B - Quality and safety of engagement (experience measures)

These indicators assess whether people experienced the engagement as respectful, safe, understandable and inclusive.

Suggested indicators (participant experience)

- Participants felt heard and respected
- Participants understood the purpose of the engagement
- Participants knew how their information would be used
- Participants felt safe to choose what to share (including ability to pass or take breaks)
- Participants could participate in a way that worked for them (language/supports/method)
- Participants would participate again (or recommend the process to others)

Ways to gather this feedback

- Short post-session verbal check-out (with interpreter support if needed)
- Simple written / translated feedback form (including pictorial scales where useful)
- Follow-up phone call or message for people who need more time or privacy
- Facilitator reflection notes (including observations about power dynamics, distress, and inclusion)

Key Reflection Questions

1. Did participants report feeling safe, heard and respected?
2. Did anyone appear excluded, rushed, or confused?
3. What would need to change next time to improve cultural safety and trust?





C - Influence and follow-through (outcome measures)

These indicators assess whether engagement had visible impact and whether organisations closed the loop responsibly.

Suggested indicators (participant experience)

- Number and type of changes made as a result of engagement (policy, process, materials, implementation, communication)
- Issues raised that could not be changed at this stage (and reasons why)
- Time taken to provide feedback back to participants/communities
- Whether participants received accessible feedback on:
 - IV. what changed,
 - V. what did not change (and why),
 - VI. what happens next
- Ongoing relationship actions taken (e.g. return session, advisory invitation, follow-up meeting, future co-design stage)

Minimum evaluation practice (recommended baseline)

At a minimum, each engagement activity should:

- record basic access/support data (interpreters, formats, supports used)
- collect participant experience feedback in an accessible way
- document key themes and resulting actions/decisions
- provide feedback back to participants and communities on outcomes and next steps
- capture lessons learned to improve future engagement.

Key Reflection Questions

1. What did this engagement influence in practice?
2. What was outside scope, and was this explained clearly?
3. Did participants receive timely and understandable feedback?
4. What commitments were made for ongoing engagement?



Part C

Tools and Examples

The tools listed below are provided in the accompanying Inclusive Engagement Framework – Tools and Resources Pack, available from AMPARO Advocacy.

Unlike this Framework, the Pack is a living set of working templates that teams complete for each engagement activity, and individual tools within it may be updated from time to time as practice develops.

- Engagement influence/decision-rights Matrix template
- Representativeness and inclusion planning check
- Privacy and confidentiality templates
- Practice guidance – closing the loop
- Planning checklist – CALD Engagement
- Engaging interpreters
- Links to cultural awareness and disability inclusion training.

[Download the Resource Pack →](#)



Guiding Principles at a Glance

Principle	Why It Matters	In-Practice - Quick Checklist
Co-design and shared decision making	People from CALD backgrounds with disability don't want to be "consulted" at the end - they want real influence from the start.	☐ Involve people from CALD backgrounds with disability and families in shaping the questions and methods. ☐ Be clear what can change and what is fixed. ☐ Recognise lived experience as expertise and pay people for their time.
Empathy over efficiency	Engagement feels safe when people are listened to with patience, not rushed through a process.	☐ Allow enough time; don't interrupt or hurry people. ☐ Start with relationship building, not just questions. ☐ Provide continuity of contact and follow-up, not one-off visits.
Cultural safety and humility	People disengage when they feel judged, stereotyped or unwelcome; they stay engaged when they feel respected and seen.	☐ Avoid assumptions about culture, belief, visa status or "deservingness". ☐ Use diverse facilitators (including gender diversity) and culturally safe venues. ☐ Name and challenge racism and stereotyping when it appears.
Accessibility and inclusion	If people can't access or understand the engagement, it isn't inclusive - even if they are "in the room".	☐ Book interpreters and allow extra time for interpreted conversations. ☐ Provide plain-language information ahead of time, and in accessible formats. ☐ Ensure venues, timing, transport and supports (e.g. childcare, payment) make participation possible.
Trauma-informed and person-centred practice	Many people have experienced trauma and service system harm; poor practice can re-traumatise and shut people down.	☐ Explain privacy and how information will be used. ☐ Don't push for details; let people "pass" on questions. ☐ Watch for distress; offer breaks, water, tissues and options to step out.
Representation and inclusion	The people who most need to be heard are often the least likely to be invited, reached or feel safe to participate.	☐ Intentionally include people who are isolated, on temporary visas, not linked to services, or facing multiple barriers. ☐ Use peer / bicultural workers and community leaders to reach people. ☐ Check diversity across culture, disability, gender, age, faith, visa status and location.
Tailored engagement methods	One-size-fits-all methods miss people and ignore community preferences about how to meet and talk.	☐ Prioritise face-to-face engagement in trusted community places where possible. ☐ Adapt methods (storytelling, visuals, small groups, one-to-one) to each community. ☐ Be flexible with timing around work, caring and religious commitments.
Transparency, trust and ongoing relationships	Trust is built when people see what happens with their input; it is broken when engagement feels tokenistic or one-sided.	☐ Clearly explain purpose, decisions being informed, and any limits. ☐ Provide specific feedback on what changed (and what didn't) because of their input. ☐ Offer ongoing contact or involvement



Minimum standards for engagement with CALD communities

(Non-negotiables for all engagement covered by this Framework)

These minimum standards sit alongside the guiding principles and apply to all engagement with people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families - whether led by government, funded organisations or partners.

At a minimum, all engagement activities must:

- **Offer language support** - Consistent with the Queensland Language Services Policy and the Queensland Language Services Guidelines. Interpreters and translated / multilingual information must be offered whenever English is not the person's preferred language. Children and other family members are not used as interpreters for systemic engagement.
- **Provide clear, accessible information** - People must receive plain-language information (and other accessible formats where needed) about the purpose of the engagement, what will be asked, and how their information will be used, before and during the engagement.
- **Use culturally safe and accessible settings** - Venues, formats and times must be chosen with CALD communities, be physically accessible, and feel culturally safe (for example, trusted community spaces rather than only government offices), with practical

supports such as transport and childcare considered.

- **Recognise people's time and expertise** - For systemic engagement (policy, program, service design and evaluation), people with lived experience from CALD backgrounds must have their contribution recognised, for example through payment, vouchers or equivalent agreed forms of recognition.
- **Respect boundaries and trauma** - No one is required to share traumatic experiences. People must be able to say no, "pass" on questions, or take a break without pressure, and supports must be available if distress arises.
- **Support equal voice** - Engagement design and facilitation must actively include people who are often missing (for example, women, refugees, people on temporary visas, people not connected to services, those with low English or digital literacy) and must use methods that enable everyone to contribute.
- **Close the loop** - Participants must receive feedback (in accessible formats and languages) about what happened with their input: what changed, what did not change (and why), where the process is at, and next steps/opportunities to stay involved. A thank-you message alone is not sufficient.

These are the baseline expectations, not the ideal. Agencies and organisations are encouraged to go beyond these minimum standards wherever possible, in partnership with CALD communities and people with lived experience.

The Engagement Cycle - Who Does What



	Prepare	Design	Deliver	Close the Loop
Government/ agencies	Map CALD communities; fund engagement; engage CALD orgs early.	Work with CALD orgs and lived experience advisors to design methods and questions.	Attend and support co-designed engagement; ensure staff follow principles.	Share decisions and actions; commit to longer-term engagement and improvement.
CALD organisations and leaders	Advise on community needs, barriers and safe settings.	Co-design formats, language, supports; help invite participants.	Co-facilitate; support safe participation; raise concerns.	Help share feedback; identify what worked / didn't; suggest changes.
People with lived experience and families	Share what would help them feel safe to participate.	Shape questions, topics and methods; identify barriers.	Share lived experience on their own terms; exercise choice and control.	Give feedback on the process; say what should change next time.



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Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)

Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)

National Disability Insurance Act 2013 (Cth)

Together, we can ensure lived experience leads the way, voices are genuinely heard, and engagement creates fair, lasting outcomes for everyone in our community.

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Thank you for your commitment to inclusive, safe, and meaningful engagement with people from CALD backgrounds with disability and their families. For more information about any of the principles, standards, or guidance within this Framework, or to access the accompanying Inclusive Engagement Framework – Tools and Resources Pack, please contact the team at AMPARO Advocacy via info@amparo.org.au