



DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN



2024-2027

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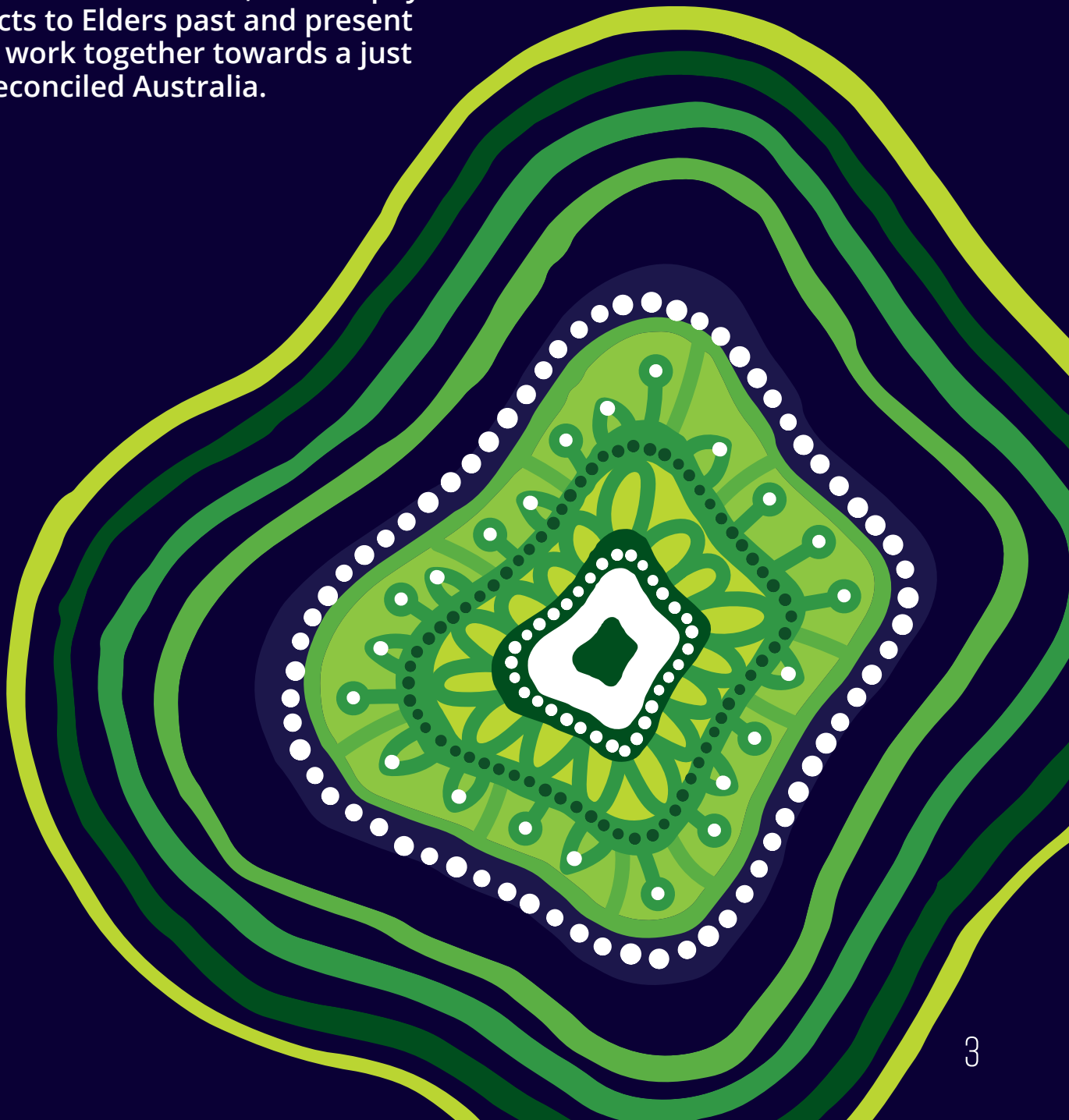
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Urban Utilities acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we connect, share and learn.

We recognise the unique and continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to land, water and culture, and we pay respects to Elders past and present as we work together towards a just and reconciled Australia.



DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN (DIAP) 2024-2027

ABOUT THIS PLAN

Urban Utilities' Disability Inclusion Plan (DIAP) is a testament to its commitment to diversity, inclusion, and social responsibility.

By identifying opportunities and embracing inclusive culture, Urban Utilities aims to build an organisation that not only excels in customer service but also serves as a role model for inclusive workplaces. In today's rapidly evolving society, the importance of diversity and inclusion cannot be overstated.

Recognising the rights and potential of every individual, Urban Utilities is proud to commit to the actions in this Disability Inclusion Action Plan. This transformative initiative seeks to foster a workplace culture that values and includes people with disability, while simultaneously enhancing the customer experience.

From a customer experience perspective, the inclusion of people with disability is paramount. Every customer should have equal access to Urban Utilities' products and services. By actively engaging with and listening to the needs and aspirations of people with disability, Urban Utilities can ensure its offerings are inclusive and accessible at every touchpoint. Whether it's signing up a new customer, paying a bill, starting a career, designing, or updating

accessible online information, providing accessible communications, or offering personalised assistance, Urban Utilities is committed to removing barriers and making a positive impact on the lives of its diverse customer base.

Creating an inclusive culture within Urban Utilities is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic advantage. Studies have consistently shown that diverse and inclusive organisations outperform their peers in terms of employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and overall business success. By integrating the perspectives and needs of people with disabilities into its operations, Urban Utilities can stay at the forefront of an evolving marketplace, drive innovation, and strengthen its brand reputation. Internally, fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace has countless benefits. By embracing team members with disability, Urban Utilities gains access to a wealth of unique perspectives, skills, and talents. Moreover, a truly inclusive workplace fosters a sense of belonging and empowers all team members to reach their full potential. By embracing the principles of disability inclusion, Urban Utilities aims to create a truly inclusive and accessible environment for all.

FOREWORD



I'm proud to introduce Urban Utilities' first Disability Inclusion Action Plan. This is a significant milestone in our organisation's journey to create a barrier-free workplace for people with disability.

Disability is as broad and diverse as the communities we serve. Whether an individual lives with a long-term, temporary, or situational disability, or cares for someone with disability, this plan aims to respond to their unique needs, and enable and empower them to bring their whole selves to work and contribute to their fullest potential.

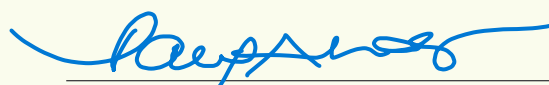
In this plan, we have committed to a number of actions, the delivery of which will lay a solid foundation for making our workplace more inclusive for people with disability. Initiatives include delivering disability awareness and inclusion management training, particularly for our people leaders; ensuring our digital and built environments are fully accessible; and undertaking a comprehensive recruitment review to identify and remove unintentional barriers for people with disability.

Further, we will lift the visibility of our people with lived experience of disability, many of whom have told us they want to share their stories and see disability acknowledged and celebrated across Urban Utilities.

As a customer-focused service provider, our commitment to removing barriers and enabling difference extends beyond our workforce to include our customers and communities. Whether a customer is seeking to pay a bill, access physical or digital information, or contact us for any reason, they should be able to do so with ease. As identified in this plan, one of our priorities will be to develop inclusive communications guidelines to ensure we use inclusive language and accessible formatting and design across all of our communication platforms.

I am grateful to those Urban Utilities team members who contributed their lived experience and provided feedback during the consultation period. Your involvement ensures this plan reflects the priorities and aspirations for people living with disability, as well as their loved ones, carers, and allies.

This plan is our promise to make Urban Utilities a truly accessible and inclusive organisation, and I look forward to updating you on our progress.



Paul Arnold
Chief Executive Officer

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

ABOUT DISABILITY

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) define disability to *include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.*¹

- In Australia, over 4 million people live with disability²
- It is estimated that 80% of disability is nonvisible³
- 19.1% of the Queensland population or just less than 1 in every 5 Queenslanders have a disability.⁴
- An estimated 306,400 Queenslanders of all ages have a profound or severe disability. People with a profound or severe disability require assistance in everyday activities, including core activities such as self-care, mobility and communication.
- 2.1 million working-age Australians live with disability, with an estimated unemployment rate of 10%
- The intersectionality of disability refers to the recognition that disability does not exist in isolation but rather intersects with other social identities and factors such as race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status and more. It acknowledges that people with disability may experience unique forms of discrimination and barriers that arise from the intersection of multiple identities. By considering intersectionality, we can develop more inclusive and equitable approaches to disability rights, advocacy, and support.
 - 1 million Australians are from a non-English speaking background and more than 1 in 5 Queenslanders were born overseas⁵ (Queensland Government 2022)
 - 38% of First Nations people have disability, this is twice the rate of the general population⁶
 - 39% of LGBTIQ+ people aged 14 to 21 identify as having disability or long-term health conditions⁷
 - More than half, or 52.7%, of the young people with disability reported experiencing verbal harassment due to their sexuality or gender identity in the past 12 months. This compared to 34.7% of the young people without disability.⁸

*references can be found on the page 18 appendix

SUPPORTING THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

Urban Utilities embraces the social model of disability, which recognises that a person's disability should not hinder their participation. Instead, it is the external barriers, both physical and attitudinal, that impede full inclusion and engagement.

By removing these barriers, individuals with disability can contribute and participate on an equal basis, with dignity and fairness, as valued members of our community.

Addressing attitudinal barriers involves examining the language and terminology we use to describe disability, as well as recognising and overcoming our conscious and unconscious biases towards people with disability. Urban Utilities is committed to fostering an environment

of support and acceptance across all aspects of our business. We strive to set an example by advocating for the rights of people with disability and promoting an inclusive culture.

Through our inclusive approach, Urban Utilities aims to create an environment where individuals with disability are respected, valued, and empowered to thrive. We recognise that diversity enriches our workforce and promotes innovation and creativity. By actively endorsing and implementing disability rights, we are dedicated to creating a workplace that not only embraces diversity but also challenges and transforms societal attitudes towards disability.

POLICY CONTEXT

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 serves as a national roadmap for promoting inclusivity and accessibility, enabling all Australians with disability to participate to their full potential as equal members of the community. The Strategy is derived from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability, whereby United Nations countries work together to promote, protect, and ensure the equal and human rights of people with disability is collectively achieved.

Australia's Disability Strategy calls upon all Australians, businesses, and organisations to ensure that people with disability can participate equally and at its heart, is a commitment to create an inclusive society. By developing a Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), Urban Utilities demonstrates its commitment to supporting the government's vision and aligning with Australia's Disability Strategy.

The Queensland Government has confirmed their ongoing commitment to increasing the opportunities for people with disability by celebrating and valuing people with disability and ensure people with disability can live their best lives in our state. Queensland have demonstrated this commitment by, along with all other states and territories, becoming a signatory to Australia's Disability Strategy.

The relevant laws, standards and guidelines considered in the development of our Disability Inclusion Action Plan include:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities ([ohchr.org](https://www.ohchr.org))

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 ([legislation.gov.au](https://www.legislation.gov.au))

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 - Disability Gateway (disabilitygateway.gov.au)

Disability (Access to Premises — Buildings) Standards 2010 ([legislation.gov.au](https://www.legislation.gov.au))

Queensland's Disability Plan 2022-27 - Queensland's Disability Plan (dcssds.qld.gov.au)

THE FOUR PILLARS OF OUR DIAP

The four pillars of inclusion represent common barriers that impact on a person with disability's right of choice and control.

Only by removing these barriers can we provide outcomes that are inclusive, dignified, and equitable. By doing so, we create better inclusion outcomes that benefit everyone.

Through the discovery and consultation process, we identified key actions that will support the four pillars of inclusion:



1. CULTURE AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP



2. DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACES



3. EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



4. ACCESSIBLE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES



Hearing loop installed in Urban Utilities meeting rooms

DISCOVERY AND METHODOLOGY

This Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2024-2027 was developed in partnership with Get Skilled Access following a comprehensive discovery process.

An initial desktop review gave us the opportunity to look at Urban Utilities' policies, processes, resources and the website from the perspective of a person with disability.

In August 2023, we also held focus group sessions which invited people from across the organisation, including those with disability, those in enabling functions such as HR, Digital and Property, and leaders, to share their experience with Urban Utilities to inform the DIAP. These consultations, co-led with Get Skilled Access, provided us with an opportunity to hear directly from the people in our business regarding their day-to-day experiences with disability inclusion and access. The feedback from these sessions, including how Urban Utilities can improve its disability inclusion outcomes and remove barriers to participation, now inform the actions within this DIAP. We look forward to continuing to consult people with disability as the plan progresses.

OVERVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS:



Desktop review completed
July 2023



Four employee focus groups held
August 2023

SNAPSHOT OF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK:

Across the desktop review and employee focus groups, key themes emerged. Aligned to the four pillars of inclusion, these included:



CULTURE AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP:

- It's clear that team members have positive intentions toward building an inclusive workplace culture.
- There are differences in how managers approach team members with disability.
- People want to increase disability inclusion across Urban Utilities but report a lack confidence and knowledge to progress.
- People who work at Urban Utilities with lived experience of disability are keen to share their stories and celebrate diversity.
- People who work at Urban Utilities with lived experience of disability feel there are barriers to career progression and leadership opportunities because of their disability.
- Urban Utilities has a committed team that will support the DIAP and its actions.



DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACES:

- Urban Utilities team members report that the Head Office (Duncan Street) building has successfully incorporated universal design elements.
- There is opportunity to replicate simple design and increase access to other Urban Utilities sites across the region.
- There is opportunity to increase the inclusion and access for people with non-visible disability.
- Team members would like to increase access to meetings by way of identifying suitable technologies to support team members.
- Urban Utilities are meeting 2.1 WCAG standard across their external website but not internal intranet.
- There is opportunity to have a consistent approach to social media accessibility.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- There is a strong commitment to increase employment opportunities for people with disability at Urban Utilities.
- Team members with lived experience of disability have a strong knowledge base to support employment initiatives and are excited for the opportunity to share their experiences.
- There are opportunities to streamline disability access on the Urban Utilities website.
- Urban Utilities are capturing some great information in their annual survey, there is the opportunity to increase the data collected around team members with disability.
- The recruitment process was challenging for people with physical disability.
- Opportunity to better leverage recruitment networks to target people with disability.
- Urban Utilities team members are open to flexible recruitment practices.
- Urban Utilities are re-developing their recruitment practices that will align with best practice inclusive recruitment.



ACCESSIBLE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES:

- Urban Utilities meet team members needs but this could be further improved by implementing a formal process to accommodate reasonable adjustment requests.
- Some consumer facing documents aren't accessible, for example via a screen reader.
- Opportunity to increase the perspective of people with disability within Urban Utilities policies and processes.
- There are evacuation plans in place for people with disability in the event of an emergency.

ONGOING CONSULTATION, REVIEW, AND MONITORING

Key internal and external stakeholder consultations have informed the actions identified within our DIAP.

The consultation identified day-to-day attitudinal barriers, various physical barriers across our community and those across the various systems and processes within the organisation. We also explored current trends and best practice outcomes in the areas of access and inclusion to benchmark this plan.

We sincerely thank our people who participated in the consultation process, and for their ongoing support to improving accessibility and inclusion outcomes. We will continue to work with relevant team members to ensure the actions are delivered within the timeframes we have committed to.

Ongoing feedback from our people, customers and community will be sought throughout the life of the plan and will help determine the success of the plan's current and future actions.

MEASUREMENT OF PROGRESS

Our DIAP's success will be assessed against the following measures:

- Actions successfully implemented over the life of the plan.
- Engaging with the team members who have been consulted and have contributed to the development of the plan.
- Quarterly reporting to the internal Accessibility Employee Network.
- Urban Utilities will provide ongoing updates and progress on the actions of the DIAP to the executive team and the CEO.

AVAILABILITY OF OUR DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2024-2027

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be available digitally via our website on our [careers page](#) and [publications](#).

DIAP ACTIONS

CULTURE AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP:

Our actions	Reporting Areas	When
<p>1. Provide Disability Confidence and Capability Training, ensuring flexible learning options are considered across Urban Utilities to support team members to better understand the disability inclusion landscape.</p>	Learning and Capability	June 2026
<p>2. Develop a training program for leaders that supports a confident and consistent approach to support team members with disability and access requirements.</p>	Learning and Capability	December 2025
<p>3. Increase the awareness of Intersectionality across Urban Utilities and how it can impact team members and customers.</p>	Organisation Enablement	December 2026
<p>4. Provide opportunities for Urban Utilities to celebrate important dates that recognise the contributions of people with disability.</p>	Organisation Enablement	December 2024
<p>5. Increase leadership opportunities across Urban Utilities for people with disability.</p>	People Experience	June 2027
<p>6. Create an Accessibility Employee Network to tap into the lived experience of Urban Utilities team members and support Urban Utilities in their commitment to increase disability inclusion across the organisation.</p>	Organisation Enablement	December 2024

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACES:

Our actions	Reporting Areas	When
<p>1. Develop Universal Design Guidelines that will support any future upgrades or changes to Urban Utilities built environments.</p>	Property	March 2025
<p>2. Undertake a review of all technologies designed to assist people to access meeting spaces, audio, screens etc. and develop a plan to prioritise areas of greatest need.</p>	Digital and Information	June 2025
<p>3. Explore opportunities for more quiet workspaces in Urban Utilities sites that support more options for an inclusive work environment.</p>	Property	December 2025
<p>4. Conduct an audit to explore opportunities to increase access across other Urban Utilities sites.</p>	Property	June 2025

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

Our actions	Reporting Areas	When
<p>1. Undertake a comprehensive recruitment review to identify unintentional barriers for people with disability, to allow increased opportunities for all roles including leadership positions to be inclusive.</p>	Talent Acquisition	December 2024
<p>2. Provide disability inclusive recruitment training to all Urban Utilities Team members that play a role of recruitment for people with disability.</p>	Talent Acquisition	December 2026
<p>3. Promote inclusive practices and initiatives on public-facing careers pages and external communication channels to encourage people with disability to apply for roles.</p>	Talent Acquisition	June 2025
<p>4. Review employee surveys to include questions regarding current inclusion experiences, flexible work practices, workplace adjustment needs, and interest in participation in inclusion events and initiatives.</p>	Organisation Enablement	December 2026
<p>5. Ensure appropriate reporting mechanisms are in place to identify and support those team members with a disability.</p>	HR Connect	December 2026

ACCESSIBLE SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES:

Our actions	Reporting Areas	When
1. Develop an inclusive communication guideline.	Brand & Creative	June 2025
2. Review current customer facing documents and information, such as customer accounts and disruption notices to increase the level of accessibility.	Creative, Customer	May 2027
3. Ensure internal processes for leave, adjustment applications and other internal processes allow people with disability the flexibility in use that may be required.	HR Connect and Systems	December 2025
4. Develop reasonable adjustment procedures to support managers and team members better understand and implement reasonable adjustment requests.	HR Connect	December 2025
5. Ensure evacuation plans consider the needs of people with disability and are socialised widely across the organisation.	Health, Safety & Wellbeing	April 2025
6. Ensure new policies and procedures are accessible and inclusive for people with disability.	People Experience and Employee Relations	December 2025
7. Embed Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 standards and related accessibility standards into core design principles for all platforms at Urban Utilities	Digital & Information	June 2026
8. Build on current procurement standards and guidelines including accessibility and disability considerations.	Procurement	December 2025

APPENDIX

REFERENCES

- ¹ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities - Human rights at your fingertips - Human rights at your fingertips | Australian Human Rights Commission
[\(cspm.csyw.qld.gov.au\)](https://cspm.csyw.qld.gov.au)
- ² People with disability in Australia, Summary - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
[\(aihw.gov.au\)](https://aihw.gov.au)
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[\(hdsunflower.com\)](https://hdsunflower.com)
- ⁴ Disability statistics | People with disability | Queensland Government
[\(www.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qld.gov.au)
- ⁵ Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families in Australia | Child Safety Practice Manual
[\(csyw.qld.gov.au\)](https://csyw.qld.gov.au)
- ⁶ First Nations people with disability
[\(royalcommission.gov.au\)](https://royalcommission.gov.au)
- ⁷ 24.10.21_Snapshot_of_MHSP_Statistics_for_LGBTIQ_People_-_Revised.pdf
[\(nationbuilder.com\)](https://nationbuilder.com)
- ⁸ [Research Report: Violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of LGBTQA+ people with disability: A secondary analysis of data from two national surveys](#)

