**Call to enforce Australia’s public procurement standard**

**Joint Statement**

# Call for Federal Government to enforce EN 301 549, the Australian Standard for public procurement

**Introduction**

This joint statement is endorsed by disability advocacy organisations, disability services and peak bodies. We have come together to call on the Federal Government to introduce legislation to make the Australian Standard for public procurement compulsory by law.

**The case for accessible Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**

People with disability are currently excluded from employment opportunities often due to the absence of accessible Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the vast majority of Australian workplaces.

Accessibility is a major barrier to participation in all aspects of life, including employment, for people with disability.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), of which Australia is a signatory, explicitly addresses accessible ICT as a human right (Article 9).

The CRPD at Article 9, *Accessibility* states:

*1. To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others,…, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems,… These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia:*

*b) Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.*

*2. States Parties shall also take appropriate measures:*

*g) to promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet;*

*h) To promote the design, development, production and distribution of accessible information and communications technologies and systems at an early stage, so that these technologies and systems become accessible at minimum cost*

While all employers should strive for accessible workplaces, public agencies and departments have an obligation to lead the way in digital inclusion. Government investments in accessible ICT products and services can lead to not only inclusive workplaces but digital innovation. The scale of many Government procurement contracts would make it necessary for ICT suppliers to develop innovative and affordable accessible technology solutions.

The public procurement policy adopted by Standards Australia in March 2017 (ASEN 301 549) was developed specifically for public procurement and addresses accessibility needs across all types of disability.

Collectively, our organisations urge Federal Government to mandate the Australian standard for public procurement.

***This Joint Statement is supported by:***

1. ACCAN
2. Blind Citizen’s Australia
3. Vision Australia
4. National Disability Services
5. VisAbility
6. Macular Disease Foundation Australia.
7. Vision 2020 Australia

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