

Response to The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability Issues Paper: Promoting Inclusion.

Q1. Inclusion means being able to access all areas of life and society where you are supported and valued to make contributions, where our human rights are respected and promoted in all areas of life and society by all of society.

Q2. An inclusive society is one where no matter who you are, your human rights are respected, supported and promoted by all of society and policies. The characteristics of an inclusive society would have applied universal design to all areas of access, to ensure everybody can participate. The supports people with disability need can be provided in a way that is consistent with promoting an inclusive society by ensuring peoples supports and the funding schemes to provide supports are promoting an inclusive approach such as, the best way to ensure independence of the person or the best way to ensure the person has supports to do all the things that “mainstream society” are doing in all areas of life. The role of governments through legislation, policy making, funding and operation of public systems and service is inherent in achieving an inclusive society, a national human rights charter would be ideal so to keep all the above groups accountable, and promoting any supports are based on human rights and ensuring inclusive society’s. The role of non-government institutions and the private sector in achieving an inclusive society is also paramount, they too should be promoting a human rights approach that focuses on inclusion in all areas of society. Inclusion in society can be measured, monitored and reported on by asking all people in society these questions, do you feel included in all areas of life, do you feel there are areas of life that need support to provide an inclusive environment. I am sure Human Rights Commissions may have the statistical data on questions like these in our country. If you are looking at this for people with disability, then you could ask questions like, do you feel you are included in decisions about your life, do you feel you can make your own decisions, do you feel you have the support to make these decisions, do you have access to environments, do you feel included?

Q3. I think Australia has a way to go in order to be classified as an inclusive society. When you have the National Disability Insurance Scheme built for the permanency of disability only, then you have silo'd people with a disability within our nation. If the National Disability Insurance Scheme was built to provide support to increase capacity for all Australians, then you would have a system that could ensure every Australian was able to access support where it was needed in order to participate. Empowering people is paramount, and focusing on deficits as permanent is not inclusive. My advocacy work covers quite a large area of rural Victoria, I have seen how hard it can be for the people I support to be included in society, especially if they do not have a lot of money.

Q4. An inclusive society can support the independence and choice and control of people with disability by setting up schemes, systems, organisations that value people's abilities and support increased capacity building, promoting recognition of human rights and ensuring society is all playing its part in promoting the above.

Q5. An inclusive society can support a person with disability's right to live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation by educating society on what violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation looks like in all forms. Recently, since the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission has become operational, services registered under the NDIS and support workers working in these service often ask me about scenarios people with disability they are supporting are facing, most of the scenario's stem from neglect, yet I have found the services do not understand what neglect is, let alone how to report on this, or even transform this for the person with disability, this is a big job.

Q6 & Q7. Practical and sustainable steps that governments, non-government institutions and the private sector can take to promote a more inclusive society for people with disability would be to adopt a National Human Rights Charter. Other steps could be to promote funding in mainstream areas promoting inclusion in these areas. Address barriers, adopt universal designs. Educate society on this vision and ensure when making decisions about people with disability that they are included as lived experience and promote engagement of lived experience.

Q8. Barriers and challenges to inclusion for First Nations people with a disability are the lack of culturally appropriate services. Holistic approaches are not happening within NDIS, and the lack of engagement in promoting Aboriginal people's rights and voices is problematic. The Uluru Statement of the Heart is a good example of how problematic our Nation can be in regards to recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values, and the NDIS should be working very closely with aboriginal led organisations to support people with a disability in a culturally appropriate way. For culturally and linguistically diverse people with a disability, all organisations need to be trained in the diversity of these communities and organisations need to provide all documents in translated languages needed, potentially a national centre could promote the translation of all documentations for businesses and organisations alike. Translators that are trained in trauma, disability and the complexity of human rights is also paramount to promoting the rights of cultural and linguistically diverse people with a disability. For people with a disability who identify as LGBTQI+ , our communitys need to uphold respect and acceptance , better education is needed to promote inclusion and especially safety for LGBTQI+ people, promoting diversity is paramount to an inclusive society. For women and girls with a disability, their voices need to be heard, too often in my job I see women and girls with disability treated as second class citizens, we know they are more likely to experience violence, abuse and neglect and yet I do not see NDIS supporting women to understand and recognize what this may mean in their lives. This educational support could be implemented in funding, and increased funding for disability advocacy organisations is paramount to all of the above populations discussion in this question. For children and young people with disability, support needs to promote abilities and supported increasing capacity building, not focus on permanency. For people with disability living in rural or remote communities, there needs to be support to travel or access health appointments and other appointments, there needs to be more services to be able to even access support, NDIS for example need to promote business building in these areas. Medical clinics should be bulk billed and GP's need to support people to access the NDIS.

Q9. To be included is fundamental to quality of life for people, barricading supports to permanent needs only is not inclusive. Promoting capacity building and abilities, and not focusing on permanency of conditions or fitting people into boxes to manage finance will support an inclusive society.

Warm Regards

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