A socially inclusive Victoria is one in which people with a disability are freely and openly included in mainstream social, cultural, economic and political life, are treated with respect, and are valued for the contributions they make. Australia has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to close the participation gap for people with disability. When people with disability are included in all aspects of society, our entire nation benefits.
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1 About the Authors

The Able Movement was founded in 2013 to take advantage of the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity presented by the establishment of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to close the participation gap for people with disability in Australia.

Our ambition is to use social movements, market mechanisms and technological innovation to change the lives of people with disability, and change the way Australians think about people with disabilities. Our work is driven by a simple vision: the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in education, the community and employment.

Currently, 45% of people with disability in Australia live in poverty; more than double the OECD average of 22%. People with a disability are less than half as likely to participate in the workforce, and people with a disability are much less likely to complete Year 12 (30% compared to 55% for the general population) or gain a Bachelors Degree (15% compared to 24%). The Able Movement sees no good reason for these disturbing statistics, and is committed to helping people with a disability, and the community at large, to embrace the full potential of those living with disability within our society.

Much of the thinking driving The Able Movement is based, not on statistics about limited participation by people with disability over past decades, but on our direct experience with people with disability who, by their own participation in the open workforce, in education, and in the social fabric of our nation, prove that disability does not need to be a barrier to full participation. As a nation we can learn a great deal from the many people with disability who are overcoming the obstacles to understand what factors helped them do this.

This submission was prepared by Mark Bagshaw and Miguel Carrasco on behalf of the Able Movement. It draws heavily on the discussion paper "Raising the Bar": Achieving the Best Outcomes for People with Disability from the National Disability Insurance Scheme. We acknowledge the support of the Boston Consulting group, in particular Natalie Garcia de Heer and Marita Hastings.

Mark Bagshaw has extensive management experience at senior levels in the business sector, primarily in the IT industry, much of which he gained over 28 years with IBM. He has also undertaken a wide range of leadership roles in the social development area, particularly related to disability reform. Mark has chaired or been a member of many government and non-government boards and advisory bodies in Australia and overseas, many of which have focused on disability reform across the spectrum, especially education and employment. As a result of a spinal injury at age 16, Mark has successfully met the challenges of living with a disability for all of his adult life.

Miguel Carrasco is a Partner and Managing Director with The Boston Consulting Group. He is the head of BCG’s Canberra office and Australian Government practice. He has more than 15 years experience in strategy consulting and has helped clients in the public and private sector with large scale design and implement reforms and transformations. He has deep experience in service delivery reform, human services and social services at both the state

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1 "Raising the Bar": Achieving the Best Outcomes for People with Disability from the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Mark Bagshaw, David Clarke, Craig Harrison, Karen Marshman and Martin Stewart-Weeks, March 2013.
and federal level having worked with the National Disability Insurance Agency, DisabilityCare Australia, FaHCSIA, the Commonwealth Department of Human Services; and with the Victorian and NSW state government counterparts.
2 Overview

The Able Movement shares the interest of the Legislative Council of Victoria and its Family and Community Affairs Committee in the social inclusion and participation of Victorians with a disability and is thrilled at the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry. Social inclusion is a critical precursor to, and product of, our goal of full and equal participation of people with disabilities in education, the community and employment.

This submission draws heavily on our March 2013 discussion paper “Raising the Bar”: Achieving the Best Outcomes for People with Disability from the National Disability Insurance Scheme. While this inquiry does not focus exclusively on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, its terms of reference are relevant to many of the themes and issues raised in our discussion paper, and this submission is an extension of our thinking in that paper.

This submission addresses three of the six terms of reference of the inquiry, namely:
(a) define ‘social inclusion’ for Victorians with a disability;
(b) identify the nature and scale of relative inclusion (exclusion) and participation of Victorians with a disability in the economic, social and civil dimensions of society; and
(f) recommend ways to increase social inclusion, including the roles of and collaboration between local, state and federal governments, the community sector, individuals with a disability and their carers.

In relation to (f) we comment on what needs to happen in the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme to improve social inclusion of Victorians with a disability, the role of governments and the community sector, and how to improve collaboration between these parties to enhance social inclusion.

Our submission provides seven recommendations which fall into three categories. The first set of recommendations should be prioritised both for the implementation of the NDIS and in other Victorian government policies and programs.

**Recommendation 1: Put Victorians with a disability at the centre of service delivery**
Better involve Victorians with a disability in the planning and production of services, build the capabilities of the sector workforce to take a holistic approach and design citizen centred services.

**Recommendation 2: Support capacity building of Victorians with a disability**
Take an appreciative inquiry approach, starting with the existing strengths and capacities of individual Victorians with a disability and the areas in which they would like to develop.

**Recommendation 3: Take a whole of government approach to social inclusion**
Develop a consistent whole of government approach to social inclusion for Victorians with a disability.

The second set of recommendations are not part of the remit of the NDIS but should nonetheless be priorities for the Victorian government and community sector.

**Recommendation 4: Support transition from schooling to employment**
Promote economic inclusion through specific targeted support for Victorians with disability transitioning from schooling to employment.
**Recommendation 5: Overcome infrastructure barriers faced by Victorians with a disability**
Make a substantial financial and intellectual investment, adopt a universal design approach, integrate the needs of Victorians with disability and adopt a 'licence to operate' perspective.

**Recommendation 6: Raise the bar of community expectations for Victorians with a disability**
Initiate an adequately funded state wide or national campaign to 'raise the bar' of community expectations about the social inclusion of Victorians with a disability.

Finally, we believe that the Victorian government should rigorously monitor and evaluate efforts to improve the social inclusion of Victorians with a disability.

**Recommendation 7: Develop and report on inclusion and participation targets**
Develop inclusion and participation targets and commit to reporting annual progress against these targets.
Definition: What is meant by social inclusion for Victorians with a disability?

A socially inclusive Victoria is one in which people with a disability are freely and openly included in mainstream social, cultural, economic and political life, are treated with respect, and are valued for the contributions they make. We define social inclusion along several dimensions:

- **Social** – people with a disability have social interaction and support from other people
- **Cultural** – people with a disability are able to participate in, and are represented in, mainstream cultural expression, including the arts, sport and recreational activities and religious activities
- **Economic** – people with a disability have access to services, are included in education, and have opportunities to participate in the workforce and generate income
- **Political** – people with disability have visibility in the mainstream political agenda, are included in debates and discussions and have access to decision-making processes

The importance of social inclusion has been recognised by the international community through the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (the Convention). Article 3(c) of the Convention describes the "full and effective participation and inclusion in society" as a foundational principle.

While social inclusion is underpinned by the empowerment and participation of people with a disability, it also involves a positive duty on the part of the society more broadly. Unless promoting social inclusion is a key component of Victorian disability strategies there is a risk that people with a disability will be "participation ready" in a society which is not "inclusion ready," which will ultimately set them up for failure.
4 Context – the nature and scale of social exclusion of Victorians with a disability

In Victoria, approximately 18%, or almost one in five people, has a physical, mental or cognitive disability, representing a population of 1 million in 2009 (ABS, 2009) and expected to rise to 1.3m by 2031. Yet despite being a significant part of the population, people with disability are missing out.

The social exclusion of people with a disability in Australia more broadly is well documented (Scope, FaHCSIA, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations). Workforce participation rates for people with disability in Australia are currently half that of the general population (Price Waterhouse Coopers, 2011), and even when people do work it is often in roles significantly below their capacity.

In Australia, only 30% of students with disability completed Year 12 in 2009 versus 55% of students without disability, and only 15% of students with disability completed a bachelor’s degree or higher compared to 24% for the general population (ABS, 2010a). 45% of people with disability in Australia live in poverty which is more than double the OECD average of 22% (OECD, 2009).

This exclusion is based on a legacy of institutionalisation and segregation combined with low expectations for people with a disability.

Social exclusion remains pervasive despite a recent focus on social inclusion in public policy, such as the vision for "an inclusive Victorian society that enables people with a disability... to fulfil their potential as equal citizens" in the State Disability Plan (Department of Human Services, 2012) and the requirement that public sector bodies promote inclusion under the Victorian Disability Act. As recently as 2013, a survey of Australians with a disability found that less than 10% of respondents felt their social inclusion needs were fully met on all dimensions (Scope, 2011). Respondents said the single biggest barrier to social inclusion was the attitude of others, with other barriers being physical access, money and transport.

These disturbing statistics point to the need for a radically different approach to disability reform based, we believe, on an aspirational approach to the capacity of people with disability.
Aspiration – what social inclusion for Victorians with a disability would look like

The aspirations we expressed for the National Disability Insurance Scheme in our 2013 report *Raising the Bar* could equally be expressed as aspirations for social inclusion for people with a disability. Meaningful social inclusion for Victorians with a disability would involve:

- **A system of support** for people with disability that challenges preconceived notions of their potential to contribute to society, continually raising the bar of what is possible at a pace that is demanding but realistic.

- **The knowledge, tools, resources and support** needed by people with a disability to have confidence they can face the world and to succeed despite life’s inevitable challenges.

- **A culture** in which those who have previously felt that they need to protect people with disability—and that the best way to do that is to control aspects of their lives and to make decisions on their behalf—understand that they need to let go. A culture that understands that the most disabling thing of all for every human being is a feeling that their own lives are not within their control, and they are in effect “second class citizens”.

- **A future** where the world has responded to the need to design and build all of our society in a way that includes every one of our citizens. In this world, the specific needs of people with disability are an integral part of the design criteria for every part of our infrastructure and every product or service developed and sold in our economy.

- **Visibility** of people with a disability, in every workplace, on every level of every organisation chart, at every sporting event, on every form of transport, in every streetscape, in numbers that reflect their existence in society.

We have invested substantial financial and human resources building a world and society that meets the needs of the “average” person. For the majority of people, their journey through each day is smooth, and as a result they face each day with confidence.

For many people with disability, most days are anything but smooth. To offer just some examples: people with physical disability often struggle to find personal care support, to access public transport, to move around our physical environment. People with visual impairment are often prevented from participating fully in meetings and conferences because the written word has not been provided in alternative format, and they often find our physical environment to be difficult to navigate. People who are profoundly deaf are faced with the challenge of finding and paying for Auslan interpreters, without whose support they are likely to be excluded from community and workplace dialogues. People with intellectual disability are still living in institutional housing in significant numbers and working in segregated, low paid employment. And the often episodic nature of psychiatric disability often makes it difficult for people in this group to contribute in our highly structured world. Many people with disability feel disempowered and, as a result, they consider the challenges they are likely to face are simply too great and lose the necessary confidence to decide to go out into the world every day.

We believe that all aspects of disability reform must focus on a single objective – to create a smooth pathway for every individual with disability from the beginning to the end of every
day. Until we achieve that, people with disability will struggle to participate fully in our community and will continue to feel like second class citizens.

To create a smooth life pathway for people with disability, and increase social inclusion, reform needs to focus on two objectives: 1) to prepare people with disability practically and emotionally to be ready to participate in society, and 2) to prepare our community to welcome the participation of people with disability at a practical and cultural level. We need an "inclusion roadmap" laying out the elements of individual and community support that each person needs to identify missing elements and links.

Many aspects of this 'roadmap' are also reflected in the goal based planning and assessment under the National Disability Insurance Scheme. However, the primary purpose of the NDIS is on the first objective described above: to prepare people with disability with the practical supports and life skills they need to face the world. We are concerned that the Australian community may conclude that the significant investment in the NDIS is enough to close the participation gap without further efforts to prepare the community to be 'participation ready.'
6 Recommendations - Achieving social inclusion for Victorians with a disability

The National Disability Insurance Scheme represents the best opportunity in decades to address the appalling social exclusion of Australians with a disability, who represent 18.5% of the total population (ABS, 2009). Specifically, the Scheme will provide direct funding to 470,000 people.

The NDIS will not live up to its aspirations without a new approach to disability support based first and foremost on a fundamental shift in thinking about the nature of disability. Success of the NDIS thus both underpins, and is underpinned by, social inclusion of people with a disability.

As we highlighted in our previous discussion paper Raising the Bar: Achieving the Best Outcomes for People with Disability from the National Disability Insurance Scheme we believe that the key success factors for the NDIS include:

- **Charting a course** that is truly aspirational;
- **Empowering the consumer** to take control of the support they need and therefore their lives;
- **Transforming the market** to respond to consumer demand with timely and quality solutions;
- **Integrating the support system** to create a smooth pathway for every person with disability, from the beginning to the end of every day.

Our recommendations to the Family and Community Development Committee relate both to how the National Disability Insurance Scheme can be implemented to improve social inclusion for Victorians with a disability and to the important role of the Victorian government and community sector in delivering all of the six streams of reform identified in the National Disability Strategy.

Our first set of recommendations: put Victorians with a disability at the centre of service delivery; support capacity building; and adopt a whole of government approach to social inclusion – should be prioritised for both the implementation of the NDIS and in other
Victorian government policies and programs. The second set: support transition from schooling to employment; overcome infrastructure barriers; and raise the bar of community expectations via a sustained social movement – are sit beyond the remit of the NDIS but should nonetheless be priorities for the Victorian government and community sector.

6.1 Put Victorians with a disability at the centre of service delivery

The National Disability Insurance Scheme attempts to place people with disability at the centre of the delivery of supports, through an individualised goal based planning and assessment process.

But social inclusion of Victorians with a disability requires that they be at the centre of all service delivery, not just individual planning and assessment processes. In order to achieve this goal the Family and Community Development Committee should consider ways to:

- Better involve individuals in the planning and production of services;
- Build the capabilities of the sector workforce to take a holistic approach; and
- Design citizen-centred services.

Involving Victorians with a disability in the planning and production of services ensures the services delivered are tailored to the specific needs of the eventual beneficiaries. It also establishes a sense of community and partnership between service beneficiaries and service professionals and is critical to achieving the political dimension of social inclusion. This recommendation is based on a simple philosophy: people with disability are in the best position to be arbiters of the support they need to meet their individual circumstances. This same philosophy underpins the worldwide move towards people with disability having greater choice and control over their lives, articulated in the policies of virtually all OECD countries, and at the centre of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Productivity Commission’s landmark report into Disability Care and Support in Australia. Not only does this approach deliver more appropriate support for people with disability, it also acts to reduce support costs due to needing less professional intervention.

The development of the Independent Living Strategy by the UK Office for Disability Issues is a good example of how people with disability can be co-producers in the policies that impact them. The policy was grounded in the experiences of people with a disability through an expert panel, conferences and meetings and the use of a case study approach to policy development.

The disability support sector workforce must have the capabilities to take a holistic approach to an individual's support needs and social inclusion goals. This is an essential precondition to the individualised goal based planning and assessment process and the aspirations for choice and control of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It will be particularly important for everyone who has a professional role in disability reform, including within the Victorian Government, to understand the magnitude of the cultural shift required to empower people with disability and achieve greater social inclusion. In the past, most roles in the disability area, to one extent or another, were characterised by professionals making decisions and managing programs on behalf of people with disability. Under a holistic empowerment model, professionals will instead take on roles of teachers and mentors, rather than doers and managers.
Citizen centred services are designed around the needs of people rather than the constraints of programs. To achieve this government and community services must be ‘joined’ to create a common access point. The Services Connect initiative of the Department of Human Services is a good example of trying to ‘break down silos’ in human service delivery. It takes an integrated approach to identify needs and deliver human services. We describe this as a shift from a “system-centred” approach to disability reform to a “person-centred” approach. Implementing the goals of the National Disability Scheme with fidelity will require that additional services, including mainstream and community supports, be ‘wrapped around’ the Services Connect initiative.

6.2 Support capacity building of Victorians with a disability

The capacity of Victorians to exercise choice and control is critical to the successful implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and to improve social inclusion.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme aims to address the excessive focus on crisis within the disability support system, the ‘rationing’ of supports and the diversion of money from early intervention. The goal based planning and assessment process represents a genuine opportunity to invest in building the capacity of people with a disability and enhance their social inclusion.

Capacity building is already a priority under the Victorian government’s Human Services; The case for change vision document. This document describes the different stages of support to build the capacity of people engaged with human services, starting with early intervention initiatives that provide immediate assistance and resources. Building an individual’s capabilities based on their existing strengths and aspirations can help them to:

- Self-manage wherever possible, and be in the system only when needed
- Be connected to their community
- Participate in the economy

There are already great individual examples of capability-focused services in Victoria. One example is the Transport Accident Commission’s (TAC) Independence Model, which established a holistic strategy to align the TAC and their clients, plus attendant care, occupational therapy and other community providers, around the goal of transitioning clients to stable post-injury independence. In a 2011 survey, prior to the implementation of the Independence Model, 65% of TAC staff and clients believed that it would result in significantly improved client outcomes (Fitzharris et. al., 2011).

Capacity building for Victorians with a disability requires concerted effort. The legacy of low expectations is difficult to overcome. Effective capacity building strategies must be conscious of this legacy, but take an appreciative inquiry approach, starting with the existing strengths and capacities of individual Victorians with a disability and the areas in which they would like to develop. Every opportunity for Victorians with a disability to establish new networks, obtain new information or learn new skills helps them to build capacity.

Members of The Able Movement have had extensive experience empowering people with disability by teaching life skills. Our experience suggests the best way to increase user choice and control for people with disability is to teach people the life skills they need to exercise this choice and control. A number of examples support this approach. An innovative
partnership between Personnel Employment (a highly respected Disability Employment Service based in Adelaide) and Youth Opportunities (a widely regarded personal leadership and development program focused on 16-year-olds who face challenging lives) demonstrated the effectiveness of teaching fundamental life skills (personal planning, decision making, communications, self efficacy, etc). This partnership resulted in significant improvements in open work placements for the clients of Personnel Employment, and the longevity of those placements. A program of this type in Victorian schools would, we believe, have a significant positive impact on social inclusion outcomes for Victorians with disability.

6.3 Take a whole of government approach to social inclusion

Historically, disability support services, and activities promoting social inclusion for people with a disability, have been fragmented, hard to navigate and inconsistent. Individuals had to navigate a multitude of programs and agencies and access to services became a 'lottery' where people with similar needs ended up receiving different supports due to their location.

The nationalisation of disability care and support under the National Disability Insurance Scheme is an effective first step in overcoming this fragmentation. It will require substantial coordination between the federal government and state and territory agencies. However the NDIS must be supported by a consistent 'whole of government' approach to social inclusion for Victorians with a disability.

There are many examples where inter-and intra-government cooperation could support a more integrated approach. For example, government should consider reforms to the Disability Support Pension to support greater employment participation (in line with the Productivity Commission's recommendations). In other portfolios (e.g., health, education) eligibility criteria and processes for disability supports should be aligned with the NDIS to reduce red tape and bureaucracy. More broadly, the government could undertake a review to determine other mechanisms to promote disability reform, including assessing industry policies, workplace regulations, disability rights legislation, as well as leveraging reforms such as the Gonski Review into school funding, and engaging with industry bodies and employer groups. This could uncover some early wins for implementing the National Disability Strategy and establish a precedent for ensuring that people with disability are considered in all aspects of government.

6.4 Support transition from schooling to employment

Victorians with a disability who are able to transition effectively from schooling to employment are more likely to meet their economic inclusion goals. It is important to engage students and parents early in thinking about employment goals. Students with disability are at greater risk of leaving school early and subsequently experience lower employment rates than other students. Open Employment and the South Australian State Transition Program demonstrate good practice in advancing economic inclusion for people with a disability.

Over 85% of school students with identified disability across Australia are defined as having a developmental disability. Traditional approaches which channel these individuals to congregate care or supported employment (e.g. Australian Disability Enterprises) do not support economic inclusion. Open Employment offers a successful alternative. By earning wages and enjoying conditions of employment the same as their co-workers without
disability, many workers with disability have proven their value as productive and loyal employees over many years.

The State Transition Program is a partnership between the school and VET sectors and the South Australian and federal governments to promote Open Employment within school communities. The aim of this early intervention approach is to support a smooth transition from school to real work for students with disability by:

- Mentoring students with disability who are at risk of early disengagement from learning. Commencing in year 9 of secondary school, mentors work with students, families, schools and other relevant services to support goal planning and decision making for the student. A “vision” of employment and further learning is encouraged and supported among all stakeholders.

- Establishing a clear plan for the transition year. This also assists students who struggle with change due to their disability to prepare for this significant step in life. It also ensures resources from the student’s own networks, school based resources and those of the specialist disability employment system are collectively focussed upon this learning pathway to employment and active participation.

- Facilitating/brokering accredited training and workplace experience (via Structured Workplace Place Learning) that assist students in the job market. Labour market competitiveness is improved by enabling students with disability to achieve vocational qualifications as part of their secondary schooling. Practical experiences in real work settings further support the student to make choices about career directions.

- Establishing ongoing relationships between the student, their parents/carers, teachers and post school services early in the transition year. A key element is involving a Specialist Disability Employment Support Worker. Planning is driven by student aspiration, not service/program design. Investments are made into interventions that support personal leadership skills and life goal setting.

- Providing on-going employment support from the service post-school. Long term partnerships with the disability employment support staff ensure that the young person has support with career advancement.

To date, the experience of the State Transition Program has been that as more students, teachers and parents see the pathways taken individuals with a disability, aspirations rise about what is both possible and desirable which leads to substantial improvements in economic inclusion and participation.

6.5 Overcome infrastructure barriers faced by Victorians with disability

Australians with a disability have nominated both physical access and transport as some of the most significant barriers they face in meeting their social inclusion goals.

Overcoming infrastructure public barriers is not a major focus of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, with only limited discretionary funding available for modifications beyond an individual support package. As such the Family and Community Development Committee should recommend that the Victorian Government take the lead on interventions to remove infrastructure barriers faced by Victorians with a disability.
Substantial financial and intellectual investment is required to define, develop and implement solutions that remove infrastructure barriers. Many solutions already exist but are not rolled out universally, and where solutions don’t exist they could be rapidly developed with a combination of smart thinking, money and process, particularly from the private sector.

The needs of Victorians with a disability should be incorporated in the original design of everything society creates, a concept known as 'universal design.' Making our infrastructure fully accessible to all people with disability can be very costly where it involves retrofitting solutions to existing infrastructure (although with "smart thinking" we can find ways to do this without exorbitant cost— for example, a wheelchair that climbs stairs would be a much more cost-effective way of making every building in the world accessible for people who use wheelchairs). With this in mind, there will be profound benefits from including the needs of people with disability into the original design of everything society creates.

An example of universal design is modern buses. Several years ago, all bus chassis manufacturers around the world decided to change the design of buses to a "low floor" design. While the decision was not directly in response to a need for accessibility, it has meant that every bus in the world will ultimately become wheelchair accessible as old buses are replaced. In most cases this will happen within 10 years.

Similarly the needs of people with disability should be integrated into every structure, system and process in our society—every planning process, every human resource process, every legal process, every education process, and every approval process. We are currently in (and have been for decades) a "laboratory" stage of disability reform in which solutions, programs and services for people with disability are developed by "disability specialists" under a system and structure that is mostly "added on" to mainstream systems and structures.

Just as importantly, the ownership of the disability reform process currently resides, for the most part, in that laboratory. Until everyone (every manager, for example) understands that they are just as responsible for people with disability as they are for anyone else in whatever they do, people with disability will remain disconnected from mainstream society and thinking.

Overcoming infrastructure barriers may be facilitated by the concept of a 'license to operate.' Businesses face a range of obligations, many of which are enshrined in legislation (occupational health and safety, legal and tax, quality and safety standards), as well as cultural expectations from the community. Together these represent a business’ “licence to operate”. That licence already includes a responsibility to people with disability, articulated in our Disability Discrimination Act. The mechanisms are there, but we need to give them teeth.

Pragmatically, the Victorian government should recognise businesses that actively seek to address infrastructure barriers. This could be achieved through an accessibility website or database and the requirement that all businesses report on their accessibility. Alternatively, Victoria could adopt an approach similar to New Zealand’s accessibility rating system that awards stars to tourism businesses based on their level of accessibility.
6.6 Raise the bar of community expectations for Victorians with a disability

Given the significance of community attitudes to the achievement of social inclusion goals by people with a disability changing community expectations and perceptions is critical.

The Sydney 2000 Paralympics demonstrated what is possible when people with a disability and their achievements are celebrated. For a short time during and after the event people with a disability felt welcomed in a city that had removed many of the infrastructure barriers they normally faced and by the people who stopped to talk to them.

The annual NSW Don’t DIS my ABILITY campaign, which coincides with the International Day of People with Disability celebrates diversity and ability of people with a disability. This campaign involves events, such as the Access All Areas film festival and inclusive theatre dance and arts, awareness raising materials, including the confronting Made You Look magazine, a YouTube channel and blog. Campaign ambassadors are selected from the arts, sport and business.

But sustained change in community perceptions requires sustained efforts, not just one off events or annual campaigns. To that end, the Family and Community Development Committee should initiate an ongoing campaign aimed at addressing negative community perceptions about Victorians with a disability. This campaign could borrow from many of the successful elements of Don’t DIS my ABILITY but operate continuously and be measured against clear, inclusion focussed, performance indicators. While the funding required for this kind of campaign is not a feature of the bi-lateral agreements between state and federal governments to establish the National Disability Insurance Scheme, a coordinated national campaign, agreed through COAG, would be preferable to a distinct Victorian campaign.

Proof that a coordinated approach to communication works can be seen in the success of the Every Australian Counts campaign. While Australia’s support for the NDIS resulted from the efforts of many people over many decades, the Every Australian Counts campaign, and its effective use of social media as a delivery mechanism, played a significant role in gaining community-wide and bipartisan support for the NDIS.

The Able Movement aims to build on the momentum created by the Every Australian Counts campaign and the significant national focus on disability reform from the NDIS. The Able Movement recognises that the most significant challenge we face in closing the participation gap for people with disability is to demonstrate to the Australian community (including people with disability and those close to them) that we must leave “welfare thinking” behind, and replace it with a truly aspirational vision of the capacity of people with disability to participate in our society.

We aim to create a new social movement in Australia based on this aspirational approach to disability reform. To start this process we have developed a campaign based on the theme “Ready, Willing, Able“, which aims to challenge our nation’s current belief system about the capacity of people with disability. It’s a deliberately challenging but exciting approach to showcase “ordinary” people with disability who have taken control of their own lives and, as a result, are participating in everything our society has to offer.
Figure 1: An example of printed material to support the "Ready, Willing, Able" campaign
7 Conclusion – measuring social inclusion for Victorians with a disability

We welcome the inquiry's focus on social inclusion and eagerly await initiatives to address the grossly inadequate outcomes for the social inclusion and participation of Victorians with a disability. We invite the government of Victoria to aspire to make ours the most inclusive in Australia.

As with other policy and community interventions, we believe that initiatives to improve social inclusion for Victorians with a disability should be rigorously monitored and evaluated. This requires a consistent and reliable methodology and metrics for measuring social inclusion outcomes. A variety of methodologies should be used to measure inclusion on social, cultural, political and economic dimensions, for example; by triangulating the results of surveys such as the Scope study with participation data and information about community perceptions about Victorians with a disability. The Victorian government should develop inclusion and participation targets for people with a disability that it is committed to reporting against on an annual basis. The use of closing the gap report cards in relation to indigenous disadvantage is a good example of how ongoing reporting against targets can galvanize action in relation to an issue.

Measuring outcomes is critical. For too long, the parlance of social inclusion has been a feature of policy discourse, but the outcomes for inclusion and participation outcomes have remained unchanged. The establishment of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and its focus on individual goal-based support offers a paradigm shift in the delivery of disability services in Australia. Now is the time to capitalise on the groundswell of support and genuine belief in reform to bring about a dramatic uplift in the social inclusion and participation of Victorians.
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