HOW YOU SEE, SEE HOW YOU CHANGE
POSITIVE

2018 ACTION REPORT

The **Mainstream** And Me

I support the
ndis

CONTENTS

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INCLUSION AUSTRALIA

Inclusion Australia, previously the National Council on Intellectual Disability (NCID), is the national voice for Australians with intellectual disability. We bring together groups across Australia who are connected to people with intellectual disability and who share the vision of inclusion in all parts of Australian life.

Our strength comes from our diverse state members who use their combined experience and expertise to increase the inclusion of people with intellectual disability in all levels of the community. They do this through advocacy across local, state and national governments as well as international agencies, such as the United Nations.

We also provide inclusive and holistic policy expertise and advice to government departments and other organisations to drive systemic change in Australia. To develop this advice, we collaborate with people with intellectual disabilities and our local networks, including families, service providers and advocacy groups.

Our state members share their extensive resources, information and knowledge across state lines so that all people with intellectual disability in Australia can benefit directly and advocate for themselves.

We are a member of Inclusion International, the international network that represents people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Inclusion Australia
acting locally · representing nationally · connecting globally

The Australian disability context is marked with inconsistencies in service delivery and access to both adequate services within the sector and opportunities to engage in the mainstream, be it for avenues to engage in community spaces, health services, recreational activities or the open employment market.[1]

The National Disability Insurance Scheme marks the greatest social change for Australians since the introduction of Medicare and brings with it a complex context within which to effect the goals the scheme is designed to deliver.

Market readiness is one of the keys to the success of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). With choice and control as core values and the scheme being based upon a person centred approach providing supports for people with disability to attain quality of life outcomes, market readiness is complex. Building capacity to support People with Disabilities' goals and aspirations ,within the disability sector and mainstream services and organisations is critical. The Mainstream and Me project has been created to build capacity within the disability community and the mainstream, reflecting the principles of the NDIS:

Investment in community participation and building social capital — to make the community accessible and inclusive for people with disability, and provide participants and non-participants with necessary supports outside the scheme, through: mainstream services; Information, Linkages and Capacity Building initiatives; and education programs[2]

[1] https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/ndis-costs/.../ndis-costs-overview.docx

[2] https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/ndis-costs/report/ndis-costs-overview.docx

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inclusion Australia's Mainstream and Me project has enabled a more nuanced focus on how People with Intellectual Disability (PWID) wish to access mainstream services, businesses and organisations and has provided a platform for PWID, employed as Peer Community Educators (PCE) to engage in conversations with the mainstream. These conversations were led by PWID resulting in: the development of strategic partnerships and alliances with key local and state community organisations; network development; community education and awareness raising; project development; mobilising localised funding opportunities and community leadership opportunities.

An overarching focus of the project was on employment, given Inclusion Australia's particular engagement in this area and that the four Inclusion Australia state agencies delivering the project, employed 25 PWID. However, each agency identified particular areas of expertise and engagement opportunities to promote the exchange of information with those sectors currently working with our community with a view to extending opportunities for PWID to engage with the mainstream.

Tasmania's agency Speak Out, identified Parents with Intellectual disability as a key group experiencing significant challenges in accessing necessary services and support and employed four parents to deliver the project. Victorian agency VALID, with its well established Peer Action Group across seven regions, built upon current capacity to employ seven PWID to deliver seven diverse, specific project outcomes. CID employed six PWID to be trained as community leaders and explore issues of access to services and opportunities. Queensland's Parent to Parent identified employment specifically and employed eight PWID to be trained as workshop presenters to deliver introductory diversity and inclusion workshops.

Consistently across the regions, delivery and outcomes reflected an overarching lack of knowledge in the mainstream regarding intellectual disability which has impacted significantly upon the paucity of opportunity for PWID to access the services and opportunities they require to realise their personal aspirations and goals, mirroring the findings, for example, from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.[3]

The 25 PCE spent their initial engagement with the project in various training and learning opportunities led by each agency's State Coordinator and Education teams and delivered some 76 workshops and engagement opportunities, engaged with 265 organisations and over 2000 people over a 6 month period. A key commonality identified across the projects was the critical role Local Councils have within the milieu of services and supports in the regions and how their engagement with the teams served to amplify outcomes.

[3] https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/ndis-costs/.../ndis-costs-overview.docx

The PCE teams also presented at a number of national events including Inclusion Australia's National Employment Forum, the National Disability Insurance Agency CEO Forum and the National Disability Insurance Agency Partners Quarterly Meeting in Melbourne.

Internationally, the work has been showcased via existing Inclusion Australia and state agency networks and partnerships. Speak Out's overarching project goal – to 'Support Before Report' was presented in Birmingham at the Inclusion International 2018 Conference as was VALID's Friendship Project. Parent to Parent's suite of Video Resumes was shared with New Zealand's sister organisation and was showcased as part of their work in the Social Enterprise sphere.

These are significant outcomes from a relatively small workforce with limited resources in an extremely short time frame. The project outcomes point to the level of capacity building that can be achieved, with funding to support a well trained workforce who have lived experience, to engage with mainstream services, businesses and organisations with the capacity to be agents of change.

The State Agencies have been able to retain twelve of the PCE team members to continue working within their organisation. However, the work will be significantly scaled down due to the limited funding the agencies have at their disposal at this time to further extend the work.

A number of avenues were explored during the project delivery in a bid to extend the life of the project and continue to employ the PCEs who now represent a significant, well trained workforce with expertise in delivering diversity and inclusion awareness presentations and training. However, additional funding in the current climate was not attainable at this time. Each agency continues to explore opportunities within their jurisdictions to build upon the foundations Mainstream and Me has provided.

The work delivered and outcomes achieved indicate a hunger in the mainstream for quality information and avenues to access the vital ongoing support required for PWID to engage in all facets of life.

The experiences and achievements of the PCE teams indicate too, that placing PWID at the centre of the process of change, empowers not only themselves by way of giving voice to their aspirations, but inspires confidence in the mainstream by empowering others with the knowledge and tools to support engagement in the wider community.

The feedback from those organisations engaged during the life of the project has been universally positive and in many instances, enlightening for those in the mainstream who have had limited opportunities to engage with PWID. For the PWID employed within the project, the opportunity to be gainfully employed and engage in meaningful work and conversation has brought new levels of confidence and optimism. On those occasions where the PCEs have engaged with their peers and other children and adults living with Intellectual Disability, the feedback has been significant in terms of raising expectations for more positive futures.

Overall the project has demonstrated what can be achieved with the right support. The project has provided a framework that if supported into the future, could provide critical support for the much needed "scaling up" of interaction, opportunity and knowledge building in the mainstream and inspire greater expectations within the disability community.

INFORMATION, LINKAGES AND CAPACITY (ILC) BUILDING

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has two parts:

• NDIS plans for eligible people with a disability, and
• Information, linkages and capacity building or ILC.

Both parts contribute to the overall goal of the NDIS to enable people with disability to live an ordinary life.

You might not have heard much about ILC up until now. That's because ILC was not part of the NDIS trial period. But all that is about to change – we have started rolling out ILC around the country.

The focus of ILC is community inclusion – making sure people with disability are connected into their communities. ILC is all about making sure our community becomes more accessible and inclusive of people with disability.

We want to do this in two ways:

1. Personal capacity building – this is about making sure people with disability and their families have the skills, resources and confidence they need to participate in the community or access the same kind of opportunities or services as other people.

2. Community capacity building – this is about making sure mainstream services or community organisations become more inclusive of people with disability.

Unlike the rest of the NDIS, ILC doesn't provide funding to individuals. We provide grants to organisations to carry out activities in the community. Many of the activities that we fund in ILC will be available to both people with disability and families. Providing information about a particular disability or condition on a website or through a phone line, for example, will help both people with disability as well as family members. And the activities we fund to build the capacity of mainstream services and community activities to be more inclusive will benefit all people with disability, as well as their families and carers.

While we want ILC activities to help lots of people, we will also fund some activities that include people who do not have an NDIS plan so they can get the help they need.

ndis.gov.au/communities/ilc-home

THE INITIAL APPLICATION & IDENTIFIED ILC OUTCOMES

This project relates to the ILC Activity Area 2: Increasing Mainstream capacity.

Specifically, the proposed project contributed to mainstream services having the information and skills they need to meet the needs of people with intellectual disability.

This was achieved by people with intellectual disability being supported to engage in conversations with mainstream services in their local areas to discuss barriers to accessing services and information and co-designing new ways of delivering services that can better meet their needs.

Increasing mainstream capacity to respond to people with intellectual disability was a critical area to be addressed. This project addressed priority areas in the National Disability Strategy: inclusive and accessible communities; rights protection, justice and legislation; economic security; personal and community support.

This project had a primary outcome that people with disability will use and benefit from the same mainstream services as everyone else.

Secondary outcomes for the project were:

- that people with disability have the skills and confidence to participate and contribute to the community and protect their rights
- that people with disability actively contribute to leading, shaping and influencing their community.

It was anticipated that services would increase their understanding of the specific needs of people with intellectual disability engaging with their service system. Resources developed from the project are available to inform and expand the reach of this project across mainstream service systems in Australia.

People with intellectual disability were involved in the design and delivery of this project, and as such, their life experience has directly informed the engagement with mainstream services across a range of critical delivery areas including health, transport, employment, justice and child protection.

INTRODUCTION

As an Information, Linkages and Capacity Building Project the Mainstream and Me is a pilot designed to increase mainstream services and organisations' capacity to welcome and embrace People with Intellectual Disability. The pathway to achieving Inclusion Australia's State Agencies' project goals was underpinned by community development strategies informed by the lived experience of People with Intellectual Disability (PWID). Principles of co-design informed training, stakeholder engagement, workshop and resource development and delivery.

INCLUSION AUSTRALIA (NCID) WAS AWARDED AN INFORMATION, LINKAGES AND CAPACITY BUILDING (ILC) GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE AGENCY IN 2017 TO DELIVER THE PROJECT, MAINSTREAM AND ME.

Twenty-five PWID were employed as Peer Community Educators (PCEs) by four State Agencies. Training and co-design focused on building confidence and enabling the PCEs to deliver presentations and workshops to mainstream service providers, organisations and businesses.

2018 saw the PCE teams working across a variety of sectors, delivering workshops to challenge assumptions and unconscious bias, promoting their capacity and ability to engage with the wider community in all facets of work and community life.

Each State Agency identified particular areas of expertise and engagement opportunities with the mainstream to promote an exchange of information. The four projects are discussed in within this report, showcasing approaches employed and project outcomes. Support for the PCE teams was provided by State Coordinators and Educators with additional project support provided by the agencies. A National Project Manager was engaged to coordinate the project and attend to reporting responsibilities and to identify opportunities for engagement at the national level.

The first six months of the project were devoted to surveying and mapping, planning, recruitment, training and co-designing workshop material. The remainder of the project involved workshop delivery, community engagement and training. Community development and engagement strategies varied across the states, dependent upon each region's particular focus area. Whilst each state retained autonomy in crafting and delivering their projects, underlying community development principles informed the work.

PARENT TO PARENT – QUEENSLAND

Promoting inclusive and innovative employment opportunities across multiple sectors with peer community educators as leaders.

CID – NEW SOUTH WALES

Building capacity and promoting inclusive practice and community building with peer community educators as leaders.

VALID – VICTORIA

Promoting inclusion across sporting, leisure, arts and recreational sectors.

SPEAK OUT – TASMANIA

Connecting parents with intellectual disability with mainstream service provision and educational programs for stakeholders to promote greater understanding.
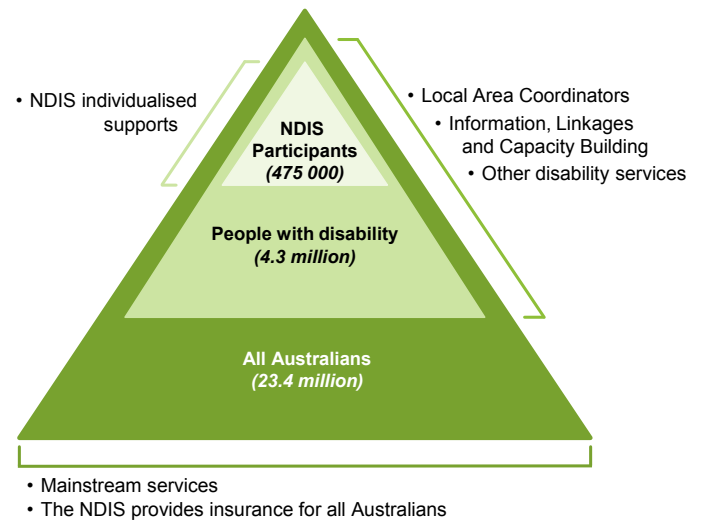

The four projects are discussed at length in this report, showcasing approaches employed and outcomes in the delivery of the work. Support for the PCE teams was provided by State Coordinators and Educators in each state with additional project support provided by the agencies. A National Project Manager was engaged to coordinate the project and attend to reporting responsibilities and to identify opportunities for engagement at the national level.

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A TRILATERAL MODEL FOR SUCCESS

The NDIS is part of a broader system of supports

• NDIS individualised supports

• Local Area Coordinators
• Information, Linkages and Capacity Building
• Other disability services

NDIS Participants (475 000)

People with disability (4.3 million)

All Australians (23.4 million)

• Mainstream services
• The NDIS provides insurance for all Australians

Number of Australians and those with disability are based on 2015 data. NDIS participants are the projected number of people eligible in 2020.[1]

The foundations for the project have been built upon embracing the lived experience of People with Intellectual Disability (PWID) via Inclusion Australia's State Agencies' extensive grassroots engagement. The project has been delivered within the NDIS' identified wider system of supports and as such has drawn upon the model in structuring the Mainstream and Me, reflecting the need for a trilateral approach, over a sustained period of time.

Research and statistical information collated over time and more recently via the outcomes of the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, reflect the lived experience of People with Disability in terms of low expectations regarding employment opportunities in particular, with only 2% of participants for example, identifying Capacity Building – Employment in the projected support category outcomes.[2]

Raising expectations, inspiring confidence and supporting future aspirations from within the disability community are vital components in realising the greater goals of the NDIS and enhancing economic participation. Considering the relatively short historical timeline since deinstitutionalisation, it may not be surprising that PWD do not identify or believe that employment in a field of their choice is possible.

Raising expectations for PWID, alongside the provision of opportunities for identified stakeholders in the mainstream to meet with, and be exposed to community members in environments where PWID are supported to share their journey and aspirations, were key to structuring engagement strategies.
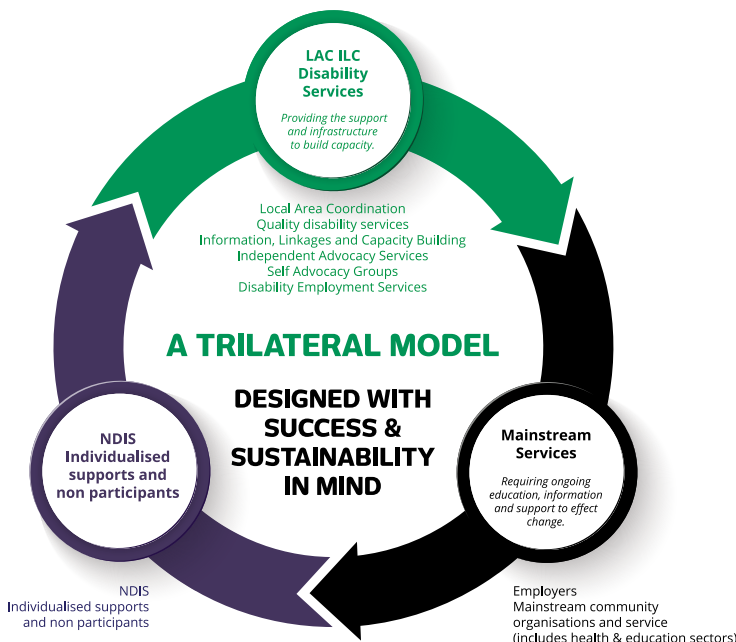
The successes demonstrated within the project's timeline have been dependent upon appropriate and timely supports across a range of needs identified by and with the Peer Community Educators.

[1] https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/ndis-costs/.../ndis-costs-overview.docx

[2] https://www.ndis.gov.au/medias/documents/h60/hc1/8799138349086/Quarterly-Report-2016-17-Q1.pdf

The Mainstream and Me project was positioned well within the broader system by way of direct access to people with disability and the stakeholder engagement strategies the host State Agencies were able to employ on behalf of the PCE team members.

The diagram (see below) illustrates the way in which the project reflects the connectivity identified in the NDIS' broader system of supports.

LAC ILC Disability Services

Providing the support and infrastructure to build capacity.

Local Area Coordination
Quality disability services
Information, Linkages and Capacity Building
Independent Advocacy Services
Self Advocacy Groups
Disability Employment Services

A TRILATERAL MODEL

DESIGNED WITH SUCCESS & SUSTAINABILITY IN MIND

NDIS Individualised supports and non participants

NDIS
Individualised supports and non participants

Mainstream Services

Requiring ongoing education, information and support to effect change.

Employers
Mainstream community organisations and service (includes health & education sectors)

The State Agencies identified gaps within the disability sector where appropriate advocacy and grassroots engagement by and for PWID is necessary if the goals of the NDIS and the ILC are to be realised on behalf of Australians living with disability. Communication was able to be effected too with Local Area Coordinators in some of the regions which has been highly beneficial in contributing to strengthening local relationships of support within the broader system.

The feedback from the Peer Community Educators has demonstrated growth in terms of capacity building and a desire to continue in paid employment with the need for ongoing support. There has also been evidence that navigating the systems within which PWID remain misunderstood. Implications for those who are accessing the Disability Support Pension for example were unclear and needed

THE MAINSTREAM AND ME APPROACH

support and clarification to enable them to navigate reporting responsibilities.

Mainstream stakeholders' feedback has indicated a distinct lack of knowledge and misinformation regarding working with PWID, strategies such as job customisation and the options for support that Disability Employment Services (DES) can offer. Engagement with DES reflected the uncertainty of the systems they operated within due to the changes occurring during the project timeline. There were also indications that the parameters the DES work within were at times counterproductive to producing positive, ongoing outcomes for PWD.

Overall, the project reflected a need for ongoing, systematic communication and capacity building across the sector to enable all stakeholders to access concise, clear information about what is available, who the other "players" are within the systems and how improved outcomes can be achieved.

The impact of mainstream services being able to meet with PWID in supported environments, where PWID are seen for who they are and what they can do was powerful and resulted in conversations and actions reflecting a desire to know more, engage more and work more with PWID.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Each State Agency's project is discussed in some detail within this report with reference to specific approaches and outcomes. However, the scope of the work has been extensive, with the outcomes largely attributed to community development practices used to frame the project. The comprehensive approaches developed by each agency to enable marked engagement with mainstream organisations and inspire new approaches and possibilities cannot be overstated.

For example, the feedback received from Tasmania's Speak Out work with Parents with Intellectual Disability and the mainstream services they need to access, reflected new awareness about how we collectively need to approach sharing new knowledge:

"Everybody has the ability to learn it's up to us to find the best way to reach them and support them in their learning"

The project outcomes in terms of mainstream reach in the first instance are significant, given the first six months of the project were devoted to training, co-designing resources, planning and stakeholder contact to effect engagement opportunities.

The mainstream reach across the sectors identified by the team of 25 PCEs equated to the delivery of some 76 workshops, engagement with 265 organisations and over 2000 people. In addition to these outcomes, CID PCEs delivered training in inclusion leadership for 50 people with disability across

LOCATION	TAS	VIC	NSW	QLD	TOTAL
Number of workshops/presentations delivered metro	4	9	17	8	38
Number of workshops/presentations delivered rural/remote	4	4	9	21	38
Total workshops delivered	8	13	26	29	76

	TAS	VIC	NSW	QLD	TOTAL
Reach (Organisations)	15	20	100	130	265
Reach (Number of participants/attendees at workshops/presentations)	176	250	415	913	2,169

NSW. In terms of the overall impact achieved within the final six month time frame, feedback received from the mainstream organisations, services and businesses was of a high standard and indicative of the beginning of new learnings, awareness and understanding about the disability community.

Monash Gallery of Arts' Stephanie Richter's comments are indicative of the impact of the work.

'The combined experience of adapting activity, and spending the day with the participants, who were discussing their lived experience of disability, provided a practical and impactful insight into inclusive programming.'

The value of being able to engage in conversation with people and organisations identified by the PCE teams and create opportunities for information sharing and relationship building is critical. However, when immediate and subsequent follow up and re-engagement with those organisations is not available, the impact will diminish over time in the absence of ongoing relationship building and connection.

Peer Community Educators reported increased levels of confidence and renewed optimism for their futures in general and employment in particular. For many, this was their first paid employment and opportunity to work in a supportive environment within a team. Various skill building and team building activities were undertaken, dependent upon the focus of each agency's project. Similarly, without the opportunity to continue in the roles and ongoing training and sustained support, Peer Community Educators are at risk of being unable to retain the skills they have been able to access during the course of the project.

Enrolling the PCE teams carried elements of risk within a 12 month project whereby in the absence of ongoing employment opportunities, the loss of their positions at the end of the project could prove to further embed disappointment and disillusionment with the systems they are working within. State Agencies, whilst optimistic that the project might continue beyond the 12 months, were clear with contractual agreements and parameters around the limitations of the project to ensure clarity for those choosing to be involved. With twelve PCEs retained as employees across the States,

five people employed in new positions outside the agencies and one new volunteer position there have been significant, positive outcomes for the team members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The twelve month time frame was ambitious, given the initial application was created with the intent of extending the project over a minimum of two years. To ensure ongoing and lasting impact, ILC projects need to be instigated for a minimum of two years, with a preference for three to five year durations to enable projects to mature and grow in line with the NDIS.

The Mainstream and Me and community development frameworks used to create and deliver the project have reaped significant results. It is hoped that future opportunities to revisit and reignite the project will arise, with a view to facilitating the cultural change required for PWID to realise their potential, enabling them to participate in the wider community.

The value of Peer to Peer interactions was highlighted by feedback from students with ID and their families across the states and in particular at CID's Inclusion Leadership workshops. Facilitating opportunities for established PWID to mentors and engage with school leavers is highly recommended.

Mechanisms to bring stakeholders together to further the aims of the ILC in creating long term, sustainable change need to be explored locally, state-wide and nationally. Whilst the NDIS and ILC are national concerns, change needs to be effected at the local level and supported by the States for the goals of the NDIS to be realised.

The impact of engaging with local councils is evident and has brought inroads for capacity building and change. The work with local libraries in Victoria led to engagement with Public Libraries Victoria, where work will continue, providing funding and support can be sourced.

Similarly significant interest was garnered across Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland for ongoing engagement from stakeholders interested in building upon their initial interactions with the project teams.

THE NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Team members have engaged with stakeholders nationally, attending and presenting at a number of events in 2018. These opportunities enabled Peer Community Educators' conversations and engagement to go beyond the State Agencies immediate jurisdictions, inviting collaboration and ongoing connections, as well as opportunities to showcase the Mainstream and Me Project.

- Speak Out Conference, Hobart
- VALID's Having a Say Conference, Geelong
- Inclusion Australia's Employment Forum, Geelong
- The National Disability Insurance Agency CEO Forum, Melbourne
- The National Disability Insurance Agency Partners Quarterly Meeting, Melbourne
- Australian Network on Disability Conference, Sydney
- Get Skilled Access Networking Event, Melbourne
- Access Arts Australia - The Meeting Place Arts and Disability Forum, Alice Springs (forthcoming)
- Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability, Gold Coast (forthcoming)

Each agency has identified significant gaps in knowledge and exposure in both the mainstream and the disability sector reflecting Murfitt's assertion regarding employment opportunities for PWID.

THE MAJOR BARRIER TO EQUITY IN EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY IS NEGATIVE ATTITUDES OR A LACK OF AWARENESS OR CONFIDENCE TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT OF PWD, RATHER THAN A LACK OF ABILITY OR POTENTIAL (MURFITT 2006).

Attendance at the Australian Network on Disability Conference held in Sydney in 2018 was invaluable in terms of gauging how employment and inclusion are being effected across the disability community in general. Employment for PWID presents some additional complexity and there was evidence of shifts in the mainstream towards embracing PWID and enhancing job creation. Organisations such as Job Support and Nova are leaders in the sector with others such as Compass Group Australia forging strong initiatives with Disability Employment Service, EPIC.

Facilitating opportunities and ensuring PWID are speaking on their own behalf about their lives and the things that matter to them, is key to effecting the social and cultural change needing to take place in parallel with the NDIS roll out. Feedback received following national engagement opportunities indicated a desire for continued collaborations in creating strategic approaches to addressing the many challenges facing PWID during this time of change.

Inclusion Australia is a leader in advocacy for open employment for PWID in Australia and hosted the inaugural National Employment Forum in 2018 in Geelong. The forum attracted stakeholders interested in furthering the opportunities and outcomes for PWID and included representation from the business community, NDIS, NDIA, NDS, DES and Inclusion International. The forum provided an opportunity to showcase models currently working well in the sector and marked a call for exploring how current positive models and outcomes can be scaled up to meet the demand t the changes in the disability sector will bring.

Mainstream and Me members presented a showcase of their work at the Forum.

The ripples of engagement have gone beyond national boundaries due to the commitment of the State Agencies in showcasing the learnings and outcomes of their specific target areas and the scope of the project as a whole.

Parent to Parent's work in the employment arena too has been showcased internationally via their connections with the New Zealand's counterpart, Parent to Parent NZ where resources including the Video Resume Project has been shared with work underway to emulate the resources. Engagement in the Social Enterprise arena too has seen ongoing connections and opportunities arising with New Zealand and European partners via the inaugural Social Enterprise forum hosted by Parent to Parent in 2017 with the second forum scheduled for September 2018 on the Sunshine Coast in association with the University of the Sunshine Coast and the Sunshine Coast Council.

VALID and Speak Out's ongoing commitment to Inclusion Australia's engagement with Inclusion International ensured the work was presented at the annual conference in Birmingham in 2018. Valid's Peer Community Educator Heather Forsyth was appointed as one of Inclusion International's Empower Us Action Team Members. Speak Out's Sonia Hume took the *Support Before Report* message to Birmingham which was received well on the international stage. The level of interest from international partners has been encouraging, indicating the potential to continue to explore partnerships with a range of mainstream and international peaks. As emerging projects mature, the possibility of extending engagement to organisations such as the International Library Association present exciting possibilities for the future.

THE INCLUSION AUSTRALIA NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT FORUM

BEYOND NATIONAL BORDERS

PROJECT RECRUITMENT, EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES & POTENTIAL BARRIERS

Twenty-five People with Intellectual Disability were recruited (Equivalent FTE – 7.5) as Peer Community Educators (PCE), and now represent a substantial work force trained to deliver diversity and inclusion workshops within their identified contexts with the appropriate support teams.

Employment was a key component of the project in terms of providing a vehicle for PWID to bring their voice to mainstream organisations and the wider community. Project capacity building was steeped in established community development principles whereby each agency leveraged existing community networks, skills and resources to engage with and develop inclusion initiatives.[1]

The influx of new employees to the small to medium sized State Agencies brought great energy and excitement to the workplace. New challenges arose in terms of supports, physical accommodations where necessary and the additional administrative, HR and financial tasks involved in stepping up workforce numbers. Twelve PCEs will be retained as employees across the state organisations, with five people now employed in new positions outside the agencies and one new volunteer position has been retained.

A National Project Manager was employed to oversee the project and reporting responsibilities, with State Coordinators appointed for each jurisdiction. Community Educators were appointed where required and capacity allowed, to support the co design and learning strategies for the PCE teams. A Resource Development position was created to support this component of the work.

The recruitment strategies used to attract PCEs across the four State Agencies provided an opportunity for agencies to explore a variety of approaches based upon existing organisational structure and community and stakeholder relationships. VALID drew upon their existing Peer Action Groups where current and emerging leaders were identified as strong candidates to transition to paid positions as PCEs.

[1] Kenny, S. (2010). Developing Communities for the Future (4th ed.). South Melbourne: Thompson.

Seven PCEs were recruited inspiring the 7 People 7 Places 7 Projects approach with each PCE taking the lead in their respective region. VALID Victoria also engaged 3 volunteer workers equivalent to .5 FTE.

Speak Out's approach was somewhat similar in terms of harnessing existing relationships with community members, specifically parents who identify as living with intellectual disability. The four candidates were employed by Speak Out with the aim of raising awareness about the high overrepresentation of parents with an intellectual disability in Child Safety Services (formerly Child Protection) cases.

CID created an online Easy English job advertisement and received 37 applications, from which six new candidates were selected. Parent to Parent's approach was somewhat of a hybrid of the other agencies' approaches whereby eight individual community members were identified as candidates via formal and informal networks. Each candidate was invited to become a Peer Community Educator.

The Peer Community Educators have offered extremely positive feedback regarding their employment. Increased confidence in public speaking and the opportunity to come to work and be a member of a working team were common threads across all state teams. More detailed accounts of feedback received from the PCEs are included in the State Agency Project Overviews.

Terms and conditions of employment varied across the agencies due to the different awards operating in each state , the nature of the projects and each organisation's unique structure. Easy English or Plain English contracts were implemented for the PCE teams.

The levels of support required by PCEs varied and included considerations around travel support to attend training and workshop delivery and additional supports required when travelling to locations away from their home to other regions.

Discussions were undertaken regarding terms and conditions of employment across the states with decisions about employment status, be they permanent part time or casual, ultimately being decided by the host agency.

The majority of PCEs were receiving the Disability Support Pension when recruited and each agency offered support and information sharing regarding reporting responsibilities. PWID will for the most part require assistance to engage with Centrelink in the first instance at least, to ensure earnings are reported and appropriate ongoing assistance may be required to meet reporting responsibilities.

Other emerging considerations arising from the recruitment process included:

- support required to submit timesheets
- managing work based online communications in general
- advice and support regarding social media engagement
- taxation and superannuation
- potential barriers to employment

Considerations regarding superannuation rest within the wider Australian context of challenges for low income earners. Inclusion Australia continues to engage in forums and matters related to policy and representation of our community within these wider discussions.

A number of potential barriers to employment emerged during the recruitment stage and throughout the project.

• PWID's access to services and community based activities in the absence of open employment opportunities. The market for these places can be competitive and are still limited. For those who had other activities in place, the notion of surrendering them for a short term project posed a risk of losing their place in those services.

• Misunderstanding of the Disability Support Pension, how to report and implications for additional income.

• Service providers proved to be a challenge in some instances where the right support was not provided. Where the 12 month contract posed changes to the routine of the house where PWID live, some negotiation was required to effect flexibility and ensure appropriate changes could be managed and supported for the scheduling of all members of a household.

• Transport was a challenge for the PCE teams across the board and in the absence of appropriate support, the agencies filled this gap via a number of strategies and will need significant consideration within the evolving NDIS and disability environment. Carpooling was instigated and support for accessing public transport was also provided.

• Service provider and family expectations continue to be low, with little optimism for long term employment. Challenging preconceived notions and unconscious bias about PWID played an important role in commencing and continuing dialogue and strategy implementations. Storytelling and sharing examples of individuals who are experiencing positive outcomes was one of the strategies used to demonstrate to individuals, service providers and families that one of the keys to success is ongoing, informed support and ensuring adequate support and set up for organisations where PWID may wish to engage, was available.

• Equity issues also arose by way of lack of access to adequate income to support the purchasing of appropriate workwear. State Coordinators and Educators were integral to effecting change, offering support and standing beside the PCEs to advocate for necessary supports with these more personal matters.

• The constraints of the funding models within which Disability Employment Services are delivered posed challenges by way of flexibility and innovation. For example a PCE was offered the opportunity to engage as an Administration Assistant for a weekly five hour shift, due to her regularly scheduled services and would have been delighted to engage as an employee. With the minimum of eight hours per week governing supported employment models, the position was unable to be supported and has now been taken up as a voluntary position which now presents an added work load for the provider and lack of income for the PCE.

• Adopting new communication and relationship and team building skills in a professional environment.

Additional relationship training was instigated in the Queensland delivery to build understanding of both personal and professional boundaries and to extend team work and team building capabilities.

Each State Coordinator has indicated the vibrancy and richness that the PCE teams have brought to their organisations as well as the growth in confidence of the PCEs have experienced. High attendance rates at work were also noted indicating team members were highly motivated.

STATE PROJECTS

PARENT TO PARENT - QLD

PROMOTING INCLUSIVE AND INNOVATIVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS MULTIPLE SECTORS WITH PEER COMMUNITY EDUCATORS AS LEADERS.

The project was a new endeavour for P2P on many fronts and presented new opportunities to engage with the mainstream and to work alongside a Peer Community Educator Team. Training approaches used by the other State Agencies were drawn upon and co-design processes were mapped to create an extensive training manual. Engaging video resumes were one of the flagship outcomes for the project.

THE PROJECT

Inclusion Australia's commitment to supporting improved open employment outcomes for PWID and Queensland's significantly higher rates of youth unemployment at 16.9%, compared to 5.5% across all age categories[1] were the drivers for focus on employment.

This direction was also informed by research across the sector regarding open employment for PWD. Murfitt (2006)[2] for example supports the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's (2005)[3] findings that a major barrier to equity in employment for people with disability is due to negative attitudes or a lack of awareness or confidence towards employment of PWD, rather than a lack of ability or potential.

The stakeholder engagement strategy was informed by PCEs identifying their dream job, enabling the coordination team to identify the mainstream services, business groups and organisations where opportunities may be created. Engagement with Disability Employment Services was integral to the strategy in connecting necessary support structures required for open employment opportunities. The outcomes of the recent Disability Field Officer Project[4] were also considered.

The project also provided capacity to support two creative arts projects and engagement with a variety of stakeholders to create a world class Photographic Exhibition where four PCEs were featured and the team gained valuable work experience hosting the exhibition which featured at the largest retail shopping outlet on the Sunshine Coast.

[1] http://www.rdasunshinecoast.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/RDASC-State-of-the-Region-Report-2012-31.pdf
[2] Murfitt, KF 2006, Attitude change in employment of people who have a disability, Doctoral Thesis, School of Psychology, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia
[3] https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/Workability%20II%20-%20Solutions%202005_1.pdf
[4] https://www.afdo.org.au/diversity-field-officer-service/

The PCE team was drawn primarily from informal networks within the P2P community whereby individuals' interest in gaining employment opportunities was known to P2P. The majority of the team members have strong backgrounds in the performing arts which provided team members with a base level of presentation skills and confidence.

As this was a new pathway within P2P, training sessions, lesson plans, resources and rationale were recorded systematically with a view to delivering a training manual at the conclusion of the project. Reflection and ongoing communication with the PCE team informed what worked and what didn't work as the work progressed. Prompts and effective delivery tools for workshop presentations were explored with structuring engaging power points and creating accessible prompt cards being some of the training based outcomes.

Queensland's P2P team delivered 29 (8 metro and 21 rural/remote) introductory diversity and inclusion workshops with a reach of over 900 individuals. Workshops were presented across a broad spectrum of stakeholders with the aims being to build confidence within the PCE team, promote inclusive employment options and enhance knowledge in the mainstream regarding the potential of people with intellectual disability to participate in open employment. Reflecting a trilateral approach, identified stakeholders within the disability sector were also given the opportunity to access the workshop delivery, to contribute to a collective rise in expectations by and for PWID.

Strategies for engaging with mainstream stakeholders were built upon the PCEs identifying the employment pathways they would like to pursue, coupled with the State Coordination team 'casting the net wide' to explore the ways in which the identified pathways might be accessed. This approach also served to extend the reach of the project and bring the disability community into view as widely as possible, whilst continuing to identify ways to support each PCE's aspirations. Engagement opportunities were sourced with Chambers of Commerce, voluntary organisations such as Rotary and Local Councils were identified as key contacts to showcase diversity and inclusion introductory workshops. Attendance at mainstream community events was also seen as an avenue for networking opportunities to begin to build community connections within the PCE team's local community.

PROJECT DELIVERY

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

The outcomes achieved in terms of community reach exceed expectations and the feedback received has been highly favourable with regard to the quality of the workshops presented and the professionalism the PCE team presented.

The PCE team have reported their enjoyment during their training phase and the process and creation of their video resumes was a highlight.

- An extensive Training Manual to support other organisations to emulate the development of Peer Community Educator teams
- Laminated flip styled prompt cards with ease of access for presentations
- Peer Educator Video Resumes designed to promote PCE abilities and used as an additional tool for presentations
- Poster – People First Language which were distributed at each presentation
- Biteable Templates - a series of four editable video styled clips designed for maximum accessibility by Peer Community Educators

Additional, unforeseen opportunities arose during the project as a number of opportunities in the mainstream emerged.

Opportunities to engage with mainstream media outlets including radio and print media provided opportunities to expand communication skills.

The launch of two creative projects – a short film, Mountain Brothers and a Graphic Novel, Infamous Bad Boy emerged via the connections and capacity building the project brought. These projects also provided opportunities for the PCE team to be involved in Event Management and develop further transferable skills including hosting, welcoming and public speaking.

These opportunities provided a platform to bring together National Independent Cinema Line, Majestic, production company Jam Productions and a local DES to consider the creation of new jobs for those PCEs interested in work in this area.

A collaborative project, the Redefining Beauty Photographic Exhibition saw the project team engage with mainstream stakeholders, Sunshine Plaza and University of the Sunshine Coast, and disability specific groups to create a world first exhibition featuring people born with specific genetically diverse conditions. The PCE team were supported to work in the space, liaising with the general public visiting the exhibition, where they were able to share their stories. The PCE teams also presented three workshops during the exhibition period.

Matters Magazine is a Sunshine Coast based mainstream publication and has provided an opportunity for a series of four editorials to be written by team member Drew Russell. The Editorial opportunity continues to enable Drew to develop writing skills and collaborate with the editorial team, showcasing Mainstream and Me.

The project outcomes and additional community engagement opportunities have provided new and exciting platforms to showcase the PCE team members' abilities and facilitated new partnerships with mainstream stakeholders. The extent to which these opportunities can continue to grow and flourish beyond the life of the project is dependent upon the extent to which further sustained funding can be sourced.

"Mainstream and Me has changed my life. I have a job and I have friends."

FEEDBACK

MAINSTREAM AND ME WORKSHOP ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

I would really consider employing a person with a disability because of the information you provided.
Sunshine Coast Business Women's Network

Great to see empowerment of presenters and how proud they are of their work;
Loved how clear the presentation was and how easily it was explained;
Gave me a much greater understanding of the M&M;
Great listening to personal testimonies of employment opportunities.
Moreton Bay Interagency Meeting

Good to see myth busting and emphasising economic benefits of inclusion was a great angle.
University of the Sunshine Coast

Great to see PWD being recognised as capable people to enter the workforce;
Very well done;
Keep up the great work!
Rotary Club Woombye

PEER COMMUNITY EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

The training phase provided PCEs to build friendships and learn together which was reflected in their completion of training one on one interviews with the Lead Community Educator.

The capacity of team members to present at workshops and grow in confidence varied, dependent upon their availability and the frequency of workshop delivery they were able to undertake. Those engaging on a more regular basis experienced a greater degree of confidence with their presentation skills. In general the PCEs enjoyed presenting workshops and sharing their stories.

Ethan
Mainstream and Me has changed my life. I have a job and I have friends.

Drew
I've loved it, especially being paid! Working with the video team has been amazing.

Allycia
I've loved doing the workshops. It's been a lot of fun going to work and I have saved up enough to go on a holiday.

ENGAGEMENT

- ABC Radio Sunshine Coast
- Aesop Media
- Bush Kids
- Business Beats
- Carers Queensland
- Central Queensland University (Noosa)
- Community Services Industry Alliance
- Councillor Greg Rogerson
- Disability Services Queensland
- Epic
- Gladstone Interagency Network
- Jam Productions
- Marty Hunt MP
- Media Makers
- MIX FM 92.7
- Mylestones
- Nambour RSL
- Nambour Special School
- National Disability Insurance Agency Partners

- Old Ambo Station (Arts based organisation)
- Rotary Clubs
- Spiral Inc
- Steps
- Sunshine Coast Access Advisory Network
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Sunshine Coast Volunteering
- Sunshine Plaza Maroochydore
- Ted O'brien MP
- Tewantin Noosa RSL
- The Coffee Place
- Toowoomba based LACs
- Toowoomba Health Services
- Toowoomba Interagency Meeting
- University of the Sunshine Coast (USC)
- USC Business Students
- Woombye Small Business Association
- Workforce Council Queensland

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Two Peer Community Educators will be retained on staff at Parent to Parent to continue their work and learning journey. They will be part of the workshop delivery team with the intention to continue to seek opportunities to engage in diversity and inclusion workshops where capacity allows.

One PCE has secured 5 hours as a volunteer with local disability service, Spiral Inc where she will be supported to work in an administration role.

Three PCEs have secured short term, paid project work on an anti-bullying video project which has been funded by TAFE and Queensland Advocacy Inc.

Employment opportunities are currently being sought on behalf of the remaining two PCEs whose specific areas and goals for employment are yet to be secured.

In addition to these outcomes some of the PCE team have been identified to be included in pilot projects which are either underway or in development. The Majestic Independent Cinema chain and Disability Employment Service, Epic are exploring a new position at the

Cinema located in Nambour as a pilot with the future goal of emulating the position in other cinemas located interstate.

Another pilot has been instigated via the Majestic connection with production company The Jam Factory. An Assistant Stage Manager traineeship pilot working within the cinema's live production department has been established with production company, Jam Factory. The pilot is featured in Community Services Industry Alliances's (CSIA) Digital Inclusion Video Project to launched at Parent to Parent's 20th Birthday Celebrations taking place at the Redefining Beauty Photographic Exhibition at Sunshine Plaza.

The relationship built with Aesop Media in creating the video resumes for the PCEs has been a fruitful one and will be an ongoing one with future projects underway.

The Mountain Brothers short film was awarded a $300 grant from Marty Hunt MP to tour on the film festival circuit and the Infamous Bad Boy project will be presented at Access Arts Australia's Meeting Place in Alice Spring in September 2018.

Council for
Intellectual Disability

THE PROJECT

The PCE team took a boots on the ground approach and used this project delivery as an opportunity to meet their communities face to face, to ascertain levels of disability awareness and offer pathways for improving access using tools they had co-designed. With a strong focus on building leadership skills, the team were enabled to implement further peer to peer education opportunities to some 50 people with disability as part of their project delivery.

CID - NSW

BUILDING CAPACITY AND PROMOTING INCLUSIVE PRACTICE AND COMMUNITY BUILDING WITH PEER COMMUNITY EDUCATORS AS LEADERS.

CID's project was based upon extensive community engagement within their current delivery model:

- **Advocacy** for the rights of people with disability

- **Provision** of information and learning opportunities

- **Empower i**ndividuals and building communities

CID recruited seven new PCEs using an easy English online job advertisement which attracted 37 applications. The new recruits' training was based upon the agency's extensive suite of training resources including leadership training, storytelling workshops and engaging in peer led training opportunities based upon previous work such as their Team Up Project[1]. Team members were supported to approach businesses and organisations and engage in conversations to gauge interest in and knowledge about, accessibility and inclusive practice. Stakeholders engaged included Local Councils, Disability Providers and businesses with each target group being offered options to access avenues to raise diversity and inclusion awareness and/or training.

- Macquarie University - Post Graduate Students
- Sutherland Court House
- 7 local businesses 3 Metro/ 4 Rural including Ce.x Club in Coffs Harbour
  1. Metro: Newcastle, Sydney CBC, South Sydney
  2. Rural: Wallsend, Carington, Erina and Wagga Wagga
- Cumberland City Council
- Local councils in Sydney, Newcastle, Wagga Wagga
- Service providers in Wallsend, Coffs Harbour and Wagga Wagga

Engagement opportunities were tailored to stakeholder need. For example the team conducted an audit on the play area in a major shopping centre at Erina Fair on the Central Coast. The Inclusion High 5 Checklist was used as the basis for the audit. The results of the audit were collated with positive aspects noted as well as areas for improvement. The management team at the centre contacted the Mainstream and Me Team for suggestions on how to improve accessibility. This was seen as a very encouraging outcome and the centre was provided with advice on the best practices and contacts.

Another significant opportunity arose for the team to provide training for the catering staff of the C.Ex Club at Coffs Harbour on the Mid North Coast. The session was focused upon increasing awareness of inclusive practice. As a result of the training, management made a commitment to review the accessibility of the menu with consideration being given to an easy read version. In addition, management reiterated a commitment to inclusive practices such as assisting where money transactions were a challenge or where a person may require longer to respond to make a choice or place an order.

PROJECT DELIVERY

[1] https://teamup.org.au/about/

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Project workers all reported increased confidence in networking, public speaking and leadership.

One of the main intended outcomes of the project was that people with disability (PWD) would benefit through increased confidence and skills. Project workers all reported increased confidence in networking, public speaking and leadership. They shared their experiences regarding the recruitment process with employers and employment services with a view to moving toward more inclusive practices. They also led and co-facilitated workshops, were active participants in meetings and presented at national conferences.

An online blog on the CID website carries progressive news style stories showcasing the Mainstream and Me journey from the PCEs' perspectives. For example, PCE Alex shares his experiences with a Poetry Group based in Newcastle and how this opportunity benefited him.[1]

Team members contributed to the development of new resources to support new Peer Community Educators and to assist organisations interested in creating more accessible opportunities for engagement and employment. They were able to clearly share the objectives of accessible recruitment with service providers. They also met confidently with local businesses regarding issues around accessibility and were able to engage in auditing activities.

The PCEs contributed to co-designing and extending CID's resources with the creation of:

• An Accessible Workplace Package
• The Inclusion High5 Checklist and a series of videos - an accessibility audit tool[2]
• Inclusion Cards
• A series of nine short videos, demonstrating the strengths and contribution people with disability bring to their workplace with the right support[3]

The Inclusion High 5 tools are designed to assess business accessibility and open up opportunities for ongoing engagement and relationship building.

The other intended outcome of the project was greater awareness and understanding of inclusion for PWD within mainstream services. This was clearly visible in the feedback received by the attendees at the various stakeholder engagement opportunities throughout the project.

[1] http://www.nswcid.org.au/blog/newcastle-group-has-the-write-stuff.html
[2] https://youtu.be/UmUN_S8VYyg
[3] https://youtu.be/Y7U7FdJLbyM

...very empowering and inspiring...

FEEDBACK

MAINSTREAM AND ME WORKSHOP ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

Feedback by the mainstream services from all activities was unanimously positive with requests for additional information and intention to invite the team back for further training indicated.

Previous positive experience in employing a person with disability is a significant determinant in future decisions to employ a person with disability.

- There is interest in easy read contracts, policies and information.
- There is an interest in the use of accessible recruitment practices.
- Services are interested in providing their staff with disability awareness training.
- Employers are receptive to low cost adjustments to make workplaces more accessible but are often not aware of what is needed and how to do it.
- Inclusion Action Plans are variable in quality.
- Students valued hearing the personal story delivered by a person with disability.
- Ongoing opportunities should be developed to look at more active participation of people with disability in the education of students, as part of school and academic programs.

PEER COMMUNITY EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

PCEs appreciated their initial engagement with CID during their interview stage by way of the interview panels allowing interviewees sufficient time to respond to questions – they felt supported.

PCEs' self-evaluation over the period of the project indicated:
- Strong growth in personal and professional skills.
- Increased self confidence.
- Capacity to work as a team and understand teamwork was increased.
- Networking skills increased.

PCEs say that they:
- Value training that has been co-designed and is provided by peers.
- Value the opportunity to meet and talk to peers.
- Benefit from easy read job ads.
- Appreciate calm and unrushed interview process.
- Appreciate information and documents in easy read.
- On-going support will be required as skill and confidence build.

Training run by project workers for PWD was reported as very empowering and inspiring by both the PCE team and the PWD who attended the workshops.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The CID Peer Community Educator Team have been recruited beyond the life of the project and will be involved as project workers with the organisation. Strategies for future collaboration towards achieving ILC outcomes include continuing to employ the Mainstream and Me project workers in CID's areas of work including promoting inclusive practice of the mainstream.

The stakeholder engagement achieved during the course of the project indicated there is interest in future workshop and training opportunities. The quality of Accessibility Action Plans was of particular interest for the PCE team, and there is significant scope to assist in the content and development of these plans, should funding support be available.

Areas of support needed to ensure ongoing skill development and continue to have positive employment experiences include:

• time and change management, organisational skills,
• emotional support,
• reading and writing support.

On-going projects need support provided via the organisation or via an individual's paid support worker. Without ongoing funding of the Mainstream and Me, delivery will not continue at the levels desired and needed.

VALiD

THE PROJECT

Through this work VALID has facilitated capacity in individuals with disability to present their opinions and knowledge through professional public speaking and networking opportunities. This process has contributed to the education of mainstream organisations about issues faced by people with disability and how mainstream organisations can become more inclusive and accessible.

VALID - VIC

PROMOTING INCLUSION ACROSS SPORTING, LEISURE, ARTS AND RECREATIONAL SECTORS.

The Victorian Mainstream and Me project focused on the areas of sport, recreation and leisure and was managed by VALID's Community Development team. Seven projects emerged from seven existing Peer Action Groups (PAG), two regionally based groups and five in metro locations.

The PAGs provided the platform to identify issues and needs that are important to people with disability and determined that targeting local mainstream services linked to these issues was an effective pathway to bring about change.

PROJECT DELIVERY

The Seven Peer Community Educators employed by VALID to lead the work were drawn from the existing Peer Action Groups currently operating across Victoria. VALID's Community Development Team provided the support and oversight for the project delivery in tandem with the Mainstream and Me State Coordinator.

The seven distinct projects were instigated in the following regions:

- Ballarat (Regional Victoria) - The Ballarat Access Card Project
- Banyule (Melbourne Metro) - Local Libraries and Neighbourhood Houses Project
- Brimbank (Melbourne Metro) - Local Libraries and Neighbourhood Houses Project
- Frankston (Melbourne Metro) - The Friendship Project
- Geelong (Regional Victoria) - Tourism Project
- Monash (Melbourne Metro) - The Arts Project
- Pakenham (Melbourne Metro) - The Safer Communities Project

VALID built individual capacity within the (PCE) team through a range of in-house professional development training sessions and externally facilitated co-design sessions with partner organisations. These included grant writing workshops resulting in the creation of a grant writing template in association with local libraries and ongoing educational opportunities facilitating information exchange. VALID's Community Development Team delivered monthly professional development training opportunities for all PCEs.

Through this work easy to use templates and tip sheets on how to create a grant application, design a project and other useful resources have been developed and are available for distribution.

7 PLACES PEOPLE PROJECTS

Peer Community Educators presented at five major public forums/conferences and 13 workshops enabling them to engage with over 250 people in mainstream organisations across the state of Victoria. The outcomes achieved were driven by the existing networks created by the Peer Action Groups across the 7 regions.

- A collaboration with the MOE PAG members PWD, Latrobe City Council, Amanda Harding from Gippsland FM and staff has resulted in a submission for a project entitled Airwaves Access. The grant is to support a planned radio show recording of the Moe PAG members. This will mean ongoing learning opportunities and enhanced community awareness of the group and their work.

- Partnerships with a number of local councils were forged and informed project design and development. These included the City of Ballarat where a Community Grant for $4000 was secured for the continuation of Leading Empowered Lives initiative in association with mainstream organisations including Showbiz Cinemas.

- A Grant of $3000 was secured for an Arts Action Project in conjunction with Monash Gallery of Art

- The Ballart Access Card for PWD to assess accessibility of local businesses and organisations in the Ballarat and Central Highlands community has been instigated in the region and will be launched in September 2018. Feedback is collated and a business is awarded for access excellence. PCE Mark Thompson is facilitating the award process

- Community Educator Ann Hutchinson successfully lobbied the installation of a pedestrian crossing to enable access to a leisure precinct in Pakenham.

- Writing workshops for PWD were conducted at Watsonia Library succeeding in promoting inclusive practices.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

- The creation of 5 x 5-minute Snapshot video excerpts about friendship to promote the Frankston Friendship project.

- Co-Design inclusive programming initiatives and evaluation of a 10-week employment training package with Watsonia Neighbourhood House

The links and partnerships with local councils demonstrate pathways for capacity building and creating opportunities for promoting inclusion. These strategies are replicable across state borders and can be scaled up to target national peak organisations.

The libraries project in the City of Banyule demonstrates great potential for implementation nationally in the following key areas of inclusive practice:

- physical access and accessible ICT,
- customer awareness
- capacity building for staff and volunteers
- skills audits for library volunteers and staff
- inclusive programming and promotion.

FEEDBACK

"I realised how important it was for people to advocate for people with disability..."

MAINSTREAM AND ME WORKSHOP ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

All participating partners were invited to respond to an online survey. The responses were unanimously positive indicating information received was practical and reflected the value of information exchange by PWID for PWID and mainstream organisations.

For example:

The combined experience of adapting activity, and spending the day with the participants, who were discussing their lived experience of disability, provided a practical and impactful insight into inclusive programming.
Stephanie Richter from Monash Gallery of Art

PEER COMMUNITY EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

Online surveys, focus groups and working group meetings, as well as one on one sessions were used to collect feedback from the PCE team members.

PCE Jenny Macpherson describes her employment at VALID: "has given me the opportunity to share my first-hand life experiences and knowledge as a person with a disability. I have also learnt valuable work and life skills such as networking and how to handle challenges within the workplace. I feel more self-confident and feel I have grown as a person. It is therefore vital that funding for projects similar to Mainstream and Me continue and that people with disabilities are given more opportunities to work in the community development sector".

Feedback from other PCEs

- *I learnt how to write community grants - project summary, how to put a budget together. I experienced and learnt at the meeting with Gandel about how things work at that higher level – in this meeting I was able to break down the barriers for people with disability and mainstream services.*

- *I realised how important it was for people to advocate for people with disability, by attending the meeting with Alex, she was able to see the value for funding a project that empowers people with disability.*

- *I also learnt more management skills like organising the group (PAG) in relation to the project such as working with a team.*

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The work of the Peer Action Groups will continue, albeit the role of the PCE will now be offered as a voluntary position. Attaining grants during the project period has ensured several projects begun, will be completed. The grant writing templates will be key to continuing to seek out opportunities for furthering the project work in each of the PAG regions.

The work within the library environment is significant, with the models created offering opportunities for expansion across state borders, should further funding opportunities emerge.

The Why Community Matters series of workshops have been received well and ongoing opportunities to continue to engage with the mainstream will continue to be sought where capacity and funding is available.

The new relationships forged during the course of the project have succeeded in growing the networks and community connections for PCEs in their regions. The feedback the team has received from the 20 community partnerships initiated within the project timeline has further validated the vital contribution of the Mainstream and Me team in creating inclusive communities for all.

SPEAK OUT – TAS

CONNECTING PARENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY WITH MAINSTREAM SERVICE PROVISION AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR STAKEHOLDERS TO PROMOTE GREATER UNDERSTANDING.

The team's objectives were clear from the outset:

- **Undertake a survey** of mainstream services to determine knowledge gaps and perceptions of their needs
- **Co design learning strategies** and workshop delivery materials
- To draw together a **diverse group** of mainstream services to stimulate positive change to better support the needs of parents with ID.
- **Workshop** participants to identify implications for their practice and intention to implement change.

THE PROJECT

Speak Out's project was driven by their work with Parents with Intellectual Disability and their over representation within Child Services in Tasmania, reflecting international trends.[1]

The nature of Speak Out's project demanded recruitment of community members with lived experience as Parents who identify as living with intellectual disability. With the significant time Speak Out has invested with their community members prior to the project, the selection of the four Peer Community Educators (PCEs) was clear from the inception, based upon pre-existing relationships that have been fostered over many years.
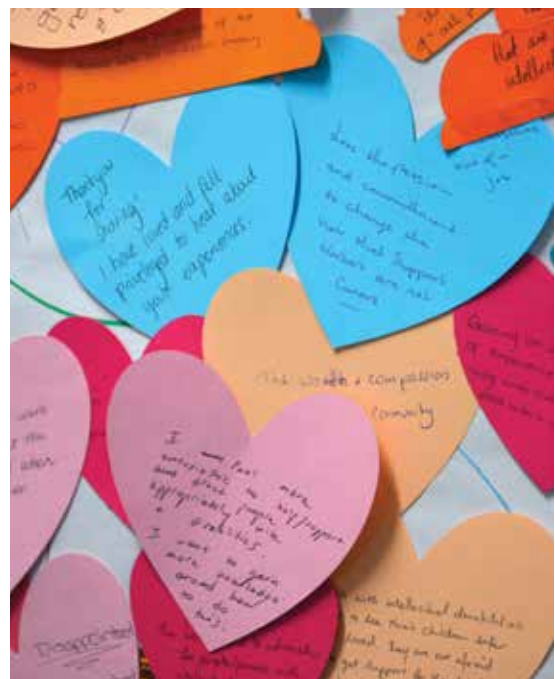
A survey was completed by 58 individuals from mainstream services and enabled the PCE team to create a clear structure to inform workshop content for their identified mainstream services. The surveys indicated a stakeholders had a strong interest in learning more about intellectual disability and identified the need to begin with the very basics – a definition of Intellectual Disability and build from the ground up.

To empower and equip the Peer Community Educator team members, a three day camp was held in August 2017 at Camp Clayton, Devonport. The camp hosted twelve parents and their children which included the appointed four PCEs.

One of the primary objectives at the camp was to gain a clear picture of team members' interactions and outcomes with mainstream services. It was also important to have clarity about the courses and supports that had been offered and undertaken by the parents.

PCEs undertook training in leadership, public speaking and workshop presentation skills to support their engagement with the mainstream.

Through workshops providing education, awareness and practical strategies informed by the lived experience of parents with intellectual disability the key message for project delivery was identified as **'Support before Report'** and was the baseline from which the workshops were created.

Feedback received from the stakeholder workshops was in part, the impetus for creating a new resource, **Communication is not a Spectator Sport** for distribution across the stakeholders working with the community. The resource provides information and steps to providing the optimum conditions for communicating and working with PWID and steps to creating effective meetings including templates.

PROJECT DELIVERY

[1].... intervention strategies which result in more negative outcomes for families headed by a parent (generally a mother) with an intellectual disability (Booth et al., 2005; Cleaver & Nicholson, 2007; Llewellyn, McConnell, & Ferronato, 2003; McConnell et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 1991). Parents with an intellectual disability or borderline cognitive impairment were included in 10% of all 2003 Canadian child protection cases and 27% of court applications made to remove children from parental care in Canada (McConnell et al., 2011). Further, McConnell and Llewellyn (2002) and Booth, Booth and McConnell (2005) reviewed international research and state that between 30 % (Denmark and Germany) and 50% (USA and UK) of children of a parent with an intellectual disability are removed from their parents' care.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Eight workshops were delivered across four rural/remote and four metro regions to organisations involved in the delivery of the support mechanisms required by Parents with Intellectual Disability. Enhanced knowledge and understanding of the lived experience and capacity of Parents with Intellectual Disability is vital for changes in their high representation within child protection services. The feedback received from the stakeholders attending the Mainstream and Me workshops indicates that impact and understanding are markedly enhanced when the presenters bring their lived experience to the arena.

- Child Safety Services
- Dental service
- Child Health
- Library staff
- Family Planning
- Early Childhood Intervention Service
- HIPPY home-based early learning and parenting program
- Salvation Army – Doorways to Parenting
- Mission Australia Integrated Family Service
- Baptcare LACs
- Children and Youth Services – Clinical Practice Consultant & Educator
- NDIS staff – LACs / Planners
- Mission Australia LAC's
- Mission Australia Personal Helpers and Mentors
- Glenhaven family support service

Some 176 people attended the eight workshops and the impact upon attendees was evidenced by the feedback received, demonstrating increased understanding of the impact of poor practice and brought about a commitment to change from many of the attendees which was reflected in the feedback received.

The evaluation strategies for the PCEs engagement and workshop participants were multifaceted and drew upon data from multiple sources. Personalised feedback postcards about each PCE were created by the team and provided attendees with the opportunity to make comments about each PCE's presentation skills.

An approach utilising the "Head, Heart, Bag and Bin" evaluation tool[1] was also used.

- Head - Something I have learnt from being part of this workshop.
- Heart - Something important I have felt or experienced from being part of this workshop.
- Bag - Something useful I will take away with me from this workshop.
- Bin - Anything that I thought wasn't so good and would want to forget having been part of this workshop

This strategy provided feedback with effective immediacy and informed follow up communications with the stakeholders in attendance. For the Peer Community Educators, video at various stages of the project was captured and informed structured self-reflection utilising the Leaders for Tomorrow Leadership Self Reflection Framework, 2012.

The Method

- 1:1 supported interview/questions with Community Educator – interviewer was known but not well-known to Community Educators
- On completion of the framework, the interviewer wrote the data-story for each person – identifying strengths and areas for development from the data. The data-story was read back to each participant to check for accuracy and brief discussion.

[1] http://evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk/media/uploads/resources/426_ess_involving_people_in_evaluation_web_-_final_web.pdf

FEEDBACK

MAINSTREAM AND ME WORKSHOP ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

- *"Puts our role at Child Safety into perspective about how we talk with (or to) parents"*
- *"I have a better understanding of how important it is to listen, value and let parents with disability have more control over their support and needs etc"*
- *"I will give more guidance to workers about positive ways to work with parents using plain English, consistent approach and show, don't tell"*
- *"Everybody has the ability to learn it's up to us to find the best way to reach them and support them in their learning"*
- *"This has been a slap in the face for me. Everyone from the receptionist to the lab should do this workshop"*
- *"I have a whole new level of understanding"*
- I will *"use teach back method with my families and my own children"*

PEER COMMUNITY EDUCATOR FEEDBACK

Ian
- *"Outside of work I express myself better"*
- *"My daughter asked me about my job... I said it's a bit like being a teacher"*

Sonia
- *"I look (and feel) happy even when I'm stressed"*
- *"It's great being paid to make a difference"*
- *"I'm more confident talking to people (outside work) like support workers, the school... as a parent"*

Bec
- *"In the beginning I'd forget to breathe..."*
- *"I rushed and talked too quickly... "*
- *"I was anxious and I'd forget to breathe"*

Given it is generally acknowledged that the number of parents with intellectual disability is on the increase, g=for a number, yet to be fully determined factors (Bernard, 2007; McConnell et al., 2006; Pixa-Kettner, 2008), it is not surprising that Speak Out have been have invited to conduct more workshops beyond the life of the project.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Speak Out's Peer Community Educator Team have been recruited beyond the life of the project and have relished the opportunity to share their stories and contribute to challenging perceptions and raising expectations across the organisations involved in supporting Parents with Intellectual Disability and their children.

The aim is to continue their work where possible due to the demand for the workshops in Tasmania and beyond. The degree to which the work can continue to be delivered is highly dependent upon future funding opportunities.

It is anticipated that the S*upport Before Report* campaign will be an ongoing, "slow burn" strategy where Speak Out and the PCE team will continue their advocacy work in encouraging a new way of thinking about and working with PWID.

The opportunity to take the key learnings and messages to Inclusion International's Conference has provided a platform for sharing the work and furthering discussions about ways in which to effect more widespread support.

The Communication - it's not a spectator sport is likely to become "a go to" for services working with PWID and is available on the Speak Out website.

The team will present their project work and outcomes at the Speak Out Annual Conference to be held in Launceston in September 2018.

IN CLOSING

The Mainstream and Me project provided Inclusion Australia's State Agencies with an opportunity to support People with Intellectual Disability as agents of cultural change with a view to building more inclusive communities.

The provision of funding for the training and education of 25 PWID as Peer Community Educators supported by co design and community development principles has benefited the PCEs personally and professionally.

Mainstream organisations engaged during the project have almost universally mirrored many of the concerns PWID have regarding the barriers to accessing opportunities in the mainstream. Given PWID are a minority, it was not surprising that on many occasions, their interactions with the mainstream revealed distinct gaps in knowledge regarding the capacity that PWID have to engage in and contribute to mainstream environments. The Mainstream and Me workshop delivery has been an important starting point for encouraging those in the mainstream to reconsider how their businesses, services and community organisations can benefit from more inclusive practices and engagement in community development opportunities.

Where PCEs were able to share their stories with other members of the disability community, feedback reflected the value of peer to peer interactions in inspiring others to seek out the right support to enable them to realise more positive futures.

Whilst the Victorian, NSW and Queensland based projects identified multiple avenues to explore inclusive opportunities in the mainstream, Tasmania's Speak Out project focused exclusively upon mainstream inclusion for Parents with Intellectual Disability. Each of the State Agencies has demonstrated significant expertise in building capacity within the disability community and in forging opportunities to engage with the mainstream.

The trilateral approach, whereby all partners within the NDIS ecosystem require ongoing support to effect change, with provision for reflection and redirection when required, provides a framework for bringing about positive outcomes for all Australians.

Local councils have been identified as key sites for effecting change and have the potential to serve, in part, as conduits for effecting inclusive practice more broadly across their regions. Similarly, State Agencies are well placed to bridge the divide between local and national endeavours. The Mainstream and Me workforce has the capacity to provide strong leadership by raising expectations from within the disability community whilst simultaneously providing information and training to support cultural change in the mainstream.

The project has demonstrated what can be achieved when PWID can access adequate and appropriate support and the power of lived experience as a vehicle for capturing the imagination of communities.

COUNCIL FOR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY (CID) NEW SOUTH WALES

In June 2018 CID will have provided capacity building projects worth over $12 million in the last five years, with funding from federal and state government. CID are experienced in:

• managing projects
• recruiting staff
• negotiating with funding organisations
• designing programs that are inclusive
• setting and reporting outcomes against budgets
• managing data, systems and reporting.

CID has a range of programs that develop skills and confidence including the Become a Leader Program. They are also involved in Mainstream and Me. Mainstream and Me sees people with intellectual and physical disabilities working together with other people in the community. Its aim is to improve awareness of the trouble people with disabilities have getting jobs, as well as helping to end stereotypes that keep them from getting and holding down a job.

CID currently has over 25 people with intellectual disability (ID) who regularly work as guest speakers and support others through peer networks. CID also has trained and experienced facilitators who run leadership programs for people with ID.

VICTORIAN ADVOCACY LEAGUE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITY (VALID) VICTORIA

VALID has been leading the way advocating for people with disability in Victoria since 1989. In this time VALID has helped people with disability and their families to be more confident and in control, and to improve the services that support them. VALID has fought to make our communities, laws and regulations fairer and has developed training tools, information and resources for people with disability and their families across Victoria.

VALID has extensive experience managing projects and working with state and federal government including programs that support empowerment, choice and control such as the Keys to Success and Parents as Planning Partners.

VALID has also lead supported decision-making in Victoria, starting peer action groups across the state and supporting people with intellectual disability to self-advocate and become leaders. VALID is currently supporting 27 peer action groups across Victoria, which Mainstream and Me will draw on to support project activities.

VALID manages a group of programs that link training, individual and systemic advocacy, peer support and community development and provide protection, safeguards and capacity building for people with intellectual disability and their communities.

VALID has set up a community development team to help build sustainable changes in mainstream services to make them more inclusive of people with disability. Their work includes hosting the Victorian Inclusive Community Development Network – for people with disabilities and disability professionals interested in inclusion.

PARENT TO PARENT (P2P) QUEENSLAND

P2P has been delivering leadership training, peer-to-peer community building, and PATH planning, a person-centred planning and goal-setting tool, for twenty years across Queensland.

Building upon their significant membership-based knowledge, P2P has developed a range of job and training opportunities for people with intellectual disability in mainstream environments. Train the trainer models and other methods that encourage collaboration and co-design, are used in the building of partnerships and relationships across disability support and mainstream communities.

The self-advocacy group, Loud & Clear has been supported to grow and thrive with P2P as a major supporter. Loud & Clear have been recognised at the state and national level due to the group's creative and dynamic approach to campaigning and raising awareness of key issues that are important to people with intellectual disability.

P2P was the lead organisation for a Community and Participant Readiness grant for Toowoomba and surrounding areas in 2016 and 2017 for the NDIS.

P2P has supported families who have been accessing Your Life Your Choice across Queensland for many years and are now working with them as well as new families and members, to transition across to the NDIS, offering Independent Plan Management and Support Coordination as a registered NDIS Provider.

SPEAK OUT ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA
TASMANIA

Speak Out Association of Tasmania, also known as Speak Out Advocacy is a state-wide, independent, non-government organisation that aims to develop a respectful and inclusive community by promoting and defending the rights of people with disability.

We provide individual advocacy and support people with disability to: speak up and be heard, get information, work with the NDIS, know and claim their rights, make decisions, make a complaint; and be represented when needed. These services are free and confidential.

Speak Out is also a membership organisation for people with intellectual disability. Self-Advocacy groups and Peer Support groups meet each month across the state. The annual Speak Out Self Advocacy Conference, is the longest running conference for people with disability in Australia.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL ON INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY (SACID)
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Working towards achieving a South Australian community in which people with intellectual disability are involved and accepted as equal participating members.

SACID is an incorporated organisation with an elected board of directors and office bearers. They have been working since the early 1950's, when children with intellectual disability in South Australia were still excluded and weren't able to attend school.

The parent-led Mentally Retarded Children's Society, the long-awaited special school was opened in 1954. There have been several iterations of SACID and in 1996, SACID replaced this organisation and has been operating since then, without any funding form either State or Commonwealth.

SACID's board consists of very dedicated people with intellectual disability, parents, state government, service providers, support workers and community members. Our self-advocates are involved in self-advocacy training so that they can "speak up' about things that matter to them.

SACID has been involved in many state and federal disability and carer reviews, the rights of people with intellectual disability and the closure of all Institutions being a particular interest of everyone at SACID.

SACID has hosted many forums/presentations/seminars/symposiums to do with the health, well-being, the quality of care and the safeguarding of people who sometimes cannot speak for themselves.

SACID secured a NDIS ILC Jurisdictional Grant to establish SA Inclusion Point to work with and for people with intellectual disability, their families and the wider community, enabling all to be included and participate in their chosen community.

DEVELOPMENT DISABILITY WESTERN AUSTRALIA (DDWA)
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Developmental Disability Western Australia (DDWA) is the oldest and most trusted source of independent information, advocacy and support for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities, their families and the people who support them in Western Australia.

DDWA provides resources, education and information, as well as advocacy and service negotiation. They also offer peer support groups which include training for parents, families and carers; planning and support coordination; behaviour support and specialist communication support. Membership for DDWA is free for individuals and families.

OUR VOICE

The Our Voice Committee is an official committee of the Inclusion Australia (NCID) Board. Our Voice provides advice to the Board on issues that are important to people with intellectual disability, including on strategic decisions and policymaking.

All members and the Chair of the committee are people with intellectual disability and self-advocates nominated by their state member agencies.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

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DATE OF SUBMISSION: 31ST JULY 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

People with an intellectual disability (ID) face many barriers to inclusion. These barriers exist across most aspects of life and tend to be based largely on a lack of information and resources, and lack of direct contact opportunities between the mainstream population (such as employers, organisations and service providers) and people with a lived experience of disability.

Helping people with an intellectual disability to produce resources, to deliver informative presentations, and to engage with mainstream service providers has the potential to break down many of these barriers. The organisations participating in this project sought to address two key barriers to inclusion for people with an ID – employment and parenting. Barriers to employment, such as the recruitment processes, interview procedures, and employment training packages are explored and addressed by the projects, as are the inaccurate stereotypes surrounding the parenting abilities of people with an ID (who tend to be over-represented in care proceedings and Child Safety Officer interventions, resulting in a higher adoption rate in these families).

AIMS

In Queensland, Parent 2 Parent aimed to promote inclusive and innovative employment opportunities across multiple sectors with peer community educators as leaders. In New South Wales, the council for people with an ID (CID) aimed to build capacity and promote inclusive practice and community building with peer community educators as leaders. In Victoria, VALID aimed to promote inclusion across sporting, leisure, arts and recreational sectors. And in Tasmania, Speak-out aimed to raise awareness of the overrepresentation of parents with an ID in Child Safety Services cases through workshops providing education, awareness and practical strategies to mainstream services and people with an ID. The content of this workshops was informed by the lived experience of parents with an ID.

PROJECT

The Mainstream and Me project ran from the 1st of July 2017 until the 31st of July 2018. It involved 4 separate state-based projects with separate focuses. 26 people with an ID were provided training and given the opportunity to gain experience in a range of activities including, delivering presentations and workshops to employers on the benefits and capabilities of employees with an ID, producing resources for mainstream organisations that promote inclusiveness, evaluating existing facilities and programs and making recommendations to increase inclusiveness, writing grant proposals, and facilitating presentations to government and non-government organisations on the issues faced by parents with an ID with the goal of developing improved interactions between parties leading to better outcomes for parents, children, and society.

OUTCOMES

After participating in the program, participants reported increased confidence, improved communication skills, improved public speaking abilities, higher levels of self-care, and increased team-work abilities. Mainstream employers, organisational representatives and service providers who attended presentations reported that having people with an ID delivering the presentation helped develop a more inclusive attitude. Representatives of organisations who attended presentations delivered by parents with an ID reported an increased awareness of the issues they faced, and many made a commitment to consider changes to improve interactions between parents and service providers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is difficult to make measurable changes with short-term projects such as this. A review of the literature has shown that the issues targeted by the 4 state-based groups are certainly justifiable and most definitely in need of intervention. On top of this, the outcomes we have seen over the 13 months of this project certainly suggest that the methods that have been employed have the potential to make significant change. It is suggested that extending this project to allow for longitudinal analysis of employment rates and Child Safety Officer intervention rates would be highly valuable. Developing standardised reporting templates that allow quantitative statistical comparisons is also recommended.

Literature Review and Project Justification Intellectual Disability (ID) is characterised by difficulties with both intellectual and adaptive functioning that begin in the developmental period (usually thought to be prior to the age of 18) and impact the conceptual, social, and practical areas of the person's everyday life. Typically, this results in difficulties with meeting accepted social and developmental standards with regards to independent functioning across a broad range of social, adaptive, communication, occupational and relationship domains (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

People with an intellectual disability (ID) in Australia are significantly less likely to be employed than their counterparts without ID, with Australia raking 21st out of the 29 OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development) nations when it comes to employment rates for people with an ID (OECD, 2010). This employment gap not only has financial and psychological impacts on the individual, it also has a large impact on the national economy. Economic modelling has shown that by closing the gap in employment rates by one third, Australia's GDP will increase by $43 billion (Deloitte, 2011). It is suggested that stigma around employing people with an ID is largely responsible for this gap. Some employers report a lack of confidence in their ability to navigate perceived complex legal and safety issues associated with employing a person with an ID and therefore may choose to avoid the issue altogether (Murfitt, Crosbie, Zammit, & Williams, 2018).

Previous attempts to reduce this gap have largely focused on the "supply" side of the issue and as such have tended to fixate on training and up-skilling people with an ID to make them job ready (Murfitt et al., 2018). Unfortunately, data provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics suggest that this approach has been unsuccessful. Between 1993 and 2012, the employment rate for people without an ID increased from 76.9% to 82.5%. While during this same period, employment rates for people with an ID fell from 54.9% to 52.8% (ABS, 2012).

The lack of success of previous programs has led to a shift in focus from concentrating solely on training people with an ID to be more "job ready", to seeking input from the business community, educating business owners of the abilities and benefits that people with an ID can bring to their business, and helping them to prepare to employ people with an ID. Collectively these employer initiatives are designed to build confidence in employers abilities to successfully employ people with an ID. Waterhouse, Kimberley, Jonas, and Nurka (2010A) reported that working to increase the capabilities of people with an ID, as well as building confidence in employers through educating and supporting businesses was vital to increasing the likelihood of

employment for people with an ID. Through focus groups involving small to medium business owners they found that employers are largely aware of the benefits of employing people with an ID, however, they generally lacked confidence in their ability to deal with employment issues that may arise when employing a person with an ID. In a more recent study of 30 HR managers, Kocman, Fischer, and Weber (2018) reported that there is a general perception among HR managers and employers that there are more barriers to employing people with an ID than people with a physical disability. It was suggested that reservations about employing people with an ID may be based on a lack of knowledge and that providing education and training to the business sector may be beneficial in alleviating these reservations and building confidence in their ability to successfully employ a person with an ID.

How this information is delivered to potential employers may also be important in maximising its effectiveness. In a study comparing ratings of interviewees, those who were interviewed face-to-face were rated significantly higher than those who were interviewed by phone (Silvester, Anderson, Haddleton, Cunningham-Snell, & Gibb, 2002). This suggests that having the opportunity to be face-to-face with potential employers may be invaluable. This may be even more important for people with an ID due to a general lack of awareness in the wider community of what an intellectual disability is, and the broad range of abilities that people with an ID possess.

This suggests that one way to break down barriers to employment may be through face-to-face interactions between employers and potential employees with an ID. This may be due to employers with little or no experience with people with an ID holding inaccurate preconceptions. Kirsh et al. (2009) reported that stigma regarding people with an ID was indeed a barrier to employment for this sector. However, employer attitudes towards hiring people with an ID was more positive when an employer reported having previous experience with employees who had an ID. This suggests that providing opportunities for employers and people with an ID to interact may reduce stigma on the part of the employer and increase the likelihood of employment for people with an ID.

When evaluating the success of employment programs, the number of hours worked per week and hourly rate of pay also need to be considered. While working for a few hours per week may still provide the individual with some social benefits, it is unlikely to provide them with a high level of independence. In a survey conducted by Inclusion Australia of 541 employed people with an ID, 43% said they earned less than $100 per week and only 23% indicated that they were earning more than $300 per week (Inclusion Australia, 2014A). Heyman, Stokes, & Siperstein (2016) found that most employed people with an ID earn minimum wage. They found that being at the same job for 3 or more years increased the likelihood of higher wage rates, hours worked tended to increase, and other benefits such as health cover were also more likely. They suggested that employment policies for people with an ID should provide incentives aimed at achieving longer-term employment.

Employment has been shown to provide individuals with an ID with many benefits. In addition to the obvious financial benefits, participating in mainstream employment also provides people with the personal and social benefits of dignity, independence, sense of purpose and the social connectedness that people with an ID may otherwise not experience (AHRC, 2016). Studies have shown that people with an ID are at an elevated risk of having a mental health disorder such as depression or anxiety compared with people without an ID (Fletcher, Barnhill, & Cooper, 2016), however, being involved in mainstream employment has been demonstrated to lead to an improved quality of life and a reduction in maladaptive thoughts, emotions, and behaviours for people with an ID (Harris, 2006). In 3 national forums facilitated by Inclusion Australia in 2014, people with an ID who were employed reported an increased feeling of independence, being accepted by the community, increased social interactions and developing friendships as some of the non-monitory benefits of employment (Inclusion Australia, 2014B).

Another important benefit of mainstream employment for people with an ID is the learning and skill development that occurs in the workplace. The motivation to learn and perform job tasks well, not only motivates people with an ID to learn new skills but has been shown to result in positive affect and positive emotional engagement during task-orientated behaviour and increased positive affect and self-confidence following goal mastery (Harris, 2006).

PARENTS WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Another significant barrier to inclusion for people with an ID can be seen in the community attitudes to their capability as parents. A disproportionally high number of families with a parent with an ID will come to the attention of child protection and support agencies due to claims that a child is at risk of abuse or neglect (James, 2004). It is estimated that around 1% of families with a child under the age of 17 have at least one parent with an ID (McConnell, Llewellyn, & Ferronato, 2000; NSW Department of Community Services, 2007). Although there are currently no recent statistics available on the number of parents with an ID in Australia, it is generally accepted that this number is rising (Bernard, 2007; McConnell et al., 2006; Pixa-Kettner, 2008) due to better opportunities for community living, the banning of involuntary sterilisation and the repeal of discriminatory legislation (McConnell & Llewellyn, 2002).

Neglect is the most common type of maltreatment in care and protection court proceedings involving families who have a parent with an ID (Lamont & Bromfield, 2009). Neglect can be thought of as persistent failure to meet the child's basic developmental needs, and neglectful parents have been described as having poor problem-solving skills, a lack of understanding of human relationships (particularly parent-child), a lack of child developmental knowledge, and an inability to engage positively with their children (Sullivan, 2000). Although some of the skills listed above can be difficult for people with an ID to acquire, James (2004) suggests neglect from parents with an ID is often associated with a lack of support as well as a lack of knowledge, and that this can be addressed through appropriately targeted interventions. Nevertheless, community and statutory agencies appear to hold a broad range of concerns about the capability of parents with an ID. While, as previously stated, only around 1% of families have a parent with an ID, Booth, Booth, and McConnell (2005) reported that families with an ID were represented in 15.1% of court care proceedings in the year 2000. They also found that children of parents with an ID were significantly more likely to be put up for adoption than children of parents without an ID. Whilst parents with an ID are likely to have several support needs, addressing some of the misconceptions and stereotypes about their skills and abilities was identified as an important way of increasing their community inclusion.

THE MAINSTREAM AND ME PROJECT

In 2017, Inclusion Australia was awarded an Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) grant from the National Disability Insurance Agency to deliver the Mainstream and Me project. The aim of this project was to break down barriers between people with an intellectual disability (ID) and mainstream employers and service providers by building confidence and skills in participants and building relationships with mainstream employers through training and supporting people with an ID to become Peer Community Educators. The role of Peer Community Educators is to educate mainstream businesses, organisations, and service providers of the benefits of employing people with an ID and of the difficulties currently faced by parents with an ID when dealing with service providers through the development and running of workshops and presentations.

The Mainstream and Me project ran from the 1st of July 2017 through to the 31st of July 2018 and involved the selection and training of 26 peer community educators across 4 different areas of focus covering 4 state-based areas. See Table 1 below.

Association	Location	Focus
Speak-Out Association of Tasmania	Tasmania	Provide education, awareness and practical strategies to mainstream services with a focus on "Support before Report"
Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID)	Victoria	To educate the community around Victoria of the challenges people with a disability face when accessing the community
New South Wales Council for Intellectual Disability (CID)	New South Wales	To build capacity and promote inclusive practice and community building
Parent to Parent Queensland (P2P)	Queensland	To promote inclusive and innovative employment opportunities across multiple sectors

While the 4 geographical areas covered by the Mainstream and Me project differed in their specific focus, their goals remained to develop

confidence and skills in participants and to engage with mainstream employers to build knowledge, confidence, and understanding. Commonly reported outcomes for participants across all areas included:

- The program provided valuable networking opportunities between participants and potential employers
- Improvements in confidence levels in general
- Improved confidence with Public speaking
- Communication skills improved in general
- Improved self-care and hygiene
- Reduced levels of anxiety
- Development of Team work skills

IN QUEENSLAND, PARENT 2 PARENT (P2P) aimed to promote inclusive and innovative employment opportunities across multiple sectors. Community educators participated in training programs in various industries including a barista course and received certificates of successful completion.

Community educator led presentations and workshops were held at a variety of locations including the University of the Sunshine Coast and at a Rotary breakfast. These presentations provided an opportunity to not only educate potential employers, but to build confidence and communication skills in the community educators who were delivering the presentations and workshops, and also provide a valuable opportunity to break down barriers through interactions between potential employers and people with an ID. Presentations and workshops were delivered to a wide variety of attendees that included federal, state, and local politicians, employment providers, NGO's, and disability interest groups.

Participants also had the opportunity to be involved in the Redefining Beauty exhibition held at Sunshine Plaza on the Sunshine Coast. Redefining Beauty was a photographic exhibition celebrating the lives of children and adults living with rare genetic conditions including Chromosome 18, Cri du Chat Syndrome, Fragile X, Vanishing White Matter Leukodystrophy and Albinism. Images were captured at various iconic Sunshine Coast locations by internationally renowned photographer Rick Guidotti founder of Positive Exposure. This exhibition provided an opportunity for members of the public to not only redefine their perception of beauty, but to learn more about people with an ID and interact with community educators as they showed them around the exhibition.

Outcomes included improved self-confidence for participants, increased confidence with public-

speaking, improved skills in interviewing techniques, positive feedback received from businesses and service providers who attended presentations, parents of children with an ID who attended workshops also provided positive feedback often asking how they could get their child involved in the program?

One evaluation procedure required peer educators as a group to watch video footage of each participant taken at the start of the program and again following completion of the program and comment on any differences in appearance, communication skills, and observable emotions (e.g. appeared nervous). Improvements in eye contact when communicating, taking greater pride in their appearance (e.g. clean shaven, new clothes) and appearing more confident were commonly reported. These outcomes are all positively related to improved employment applications, improved interview performance, and increased likelihood of long-term success in employment. In a study that asked business executives to list the most important personal skills an employee should have, Robles (2012) found communication skills, social skills, and team work were listed as among the most important.

THE NEW SOUTH WALES COUNCIL OF INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY (CID) aimed to build capacity and promote inclusive practice and community building. CID recruited and trained 6 project workers with an ID to help develop resources, assess local businesses, and deliver workshops to employers and employment service providers on the benefits of inclusion.

Training given to project workers provided experience in applying for jobs through the open recruitment and merit-based system, leadership training, story-telling to facilitate improved communication skills, and workshops facilitated by team-up which provided project workers with skills to enable them to train other people with a disability and also provided them with skills for working as a member of a team.

The project team developed the Inclusion High 5 Checklist as a tool to assess businesses and facilities for their inclusiveness.

The checklist includes the following 5 items:

1. Open and Respectful to all
2. Easy to read signage and information
3. Disability awareness
4. Supportive and friendly attitude
5. Physical design and environment

Project workers audited the play area of a local shopping centre using the checklist and provided their findings to centre management. The audit was well received, and Centre management contacted the project team for suggestions on how to improve their play facility. Another audit was carried out on catering staff at the C. EX club at Coffs Harbour with the aim of increasing awareness of inclusive practices. As a result of the audit, management have committed to reviewing the layout of their menus with consideration being given to making an easy read version.

The Project team also delivered presentations to employers and employment service providers where they shared their experiences regarding the recruitment process with the aim of developing more inclusive practices. Following these presentations mainstream employers and service providers reported a greater awareness and understanding of inclusion for people with an ID. Employers reported that they were generally interested in the use of accessible recruitment practices, open to the use of easy read contracts, policies and information, receptive to low cost adjustments to make workplaces more accessible.

Employers who attended presentations and workshops also reported that previous positive experiences in employing a person with an intellectual disability has a significant impact on future decisions to employ a person with an ID. Employers also commented that having workshops led or co-facilitated by people with an intellectual disability was a positive feature as it provided many people with their first contact with a person with a disability, and hearing their experiences of inclusion and exclusion was powerful in shaping more inclusive attitudes.

Another important activity undertaken was the 'Become an Inclusion Leader' workshops. 5 workshops were held (3 metro & 2 rural) that included 43 participants with a disability. These project worker led workshops provided participants with tools and raised awareness on how to become an inclusion leader in the local community through project workers' sharing their stories of inclusion. Participants of the workshops reported feeling empowered and inspired to make positive changes in their communities. Project workers reported progress in their skills in meeting new people, educating their peers and sharing their experiences of working on inclusion.

THE VICTORIAN ADVOCACY LEAGUE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITY (VALID) aimed to educate communities around Victoria of the challenges people with a disability face when accessing the community. In particular, VALID focused on sport, recreation and tourism and actively targeted mainstream providers to raise awareness and build their capacity to support people with disabilities. Seven peer educators were employed (0.3 ETF each) for 10 hours per week along with 3 volunteers who worked 5 hours per week to develop resources including printed resources and videos about inclusion and accessibility for people with an ID. Peer educators also assisted with the development and submission of grant applications for making facilities such as libraries more accessible for people with a disability.

VALID reported positive outcomes across all 7 Community Educator led projects (5 Melbourne Metro and 2 Regional area). In one particular project, peer educators undertook an evaluation of the new employee training package for Watsonia Neighbourhood House. The evaluation included analysing the package and providing management with recommendations to make the package more inclusive. It was also suggested that peer educators could deliver the training.

In Moe and Traralgon, VALID delivered several workshops including the Why Community Matters Forum, Latrobe Business/Sports Breakfast and Disability Sport and Recreation Victoria AFL Come and Try Clinics. The project also included a collaboration with Gippsland FM which introduced the local Peer Action Group to radio station/production techniques and involved the production of a podcast. This work increased participants capacity in the mainstream area of community radio and has led to a pilot of a state-wide initiative to include Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU), 3CR Radio and AMIDA. Other achievements and outcomes include the Shire of Cardinia Safer Communities project, where Community Educator Ann Hutchinson successfully lobbied the installation of a pedestrian crossing to enable access to a leisure precinct in Pakenham.

Outcomes reported by VALID for the Mainstream and Me project include:

- A significant increase in presentation skills and confidence while public speaking for peer educators
- Networking opportunities for peer educators with mainstream organisations

- The development of easy to use templates for grant funding applications
- Education of mainstream organisations of issues faced by people with an ID and how to make their organisations more inclusive and accessible.

Collaborative partnerships with community organisations resulted in positive outcomes through the co-designing of inclusive programming by staff and the Community Educators. Stephanie Richter from Monash Gallery of Art commented that "the combined experience of adapting activity, and spending the day with the participants, who were discussing their lived experience of disability, provided a practical and impactful insight into inclusive programming" This feedback is typical of that received by all partner organisations, totaling over 20 community partnerships.

VALID also partnered with a number of local councils to inform project design and development. This included the City of Ballarat (secured Community Grant for continuation of project) with the Leading Empowered Lives initiative, the Shire of Cardinia with the Safer Communities project, the City of Greater Geelong and the Geelong Inclusive Arts Project, Monash City Council (secured Community Grant for continuation of project) and the Arts Action project, Frankston City Council and the Latrobe City Council and the Sports/Business Breakfast and Why Community Matters workshops.

VALID's Community Development Team delivered professional development training on a monthly basis to all Community Educators. Community Educators then had the opportunity to present in 5 major public forums/conferences. Both VALID staff and Community Educators delivered over 13 workshops to mainstream organisations across Victoria and positive feedback was received from all participating partners.

SPEAK OUT TASMANIA addressed the issue of parents with an ID being disproportionally represented in care hearings and the perceived inequity in their treatment by Child Safety Services by working with parents with an ID to produce resources for mainstream service providers and by delivering workshops to these service providers. Four parents with an ID were employed as community educators and the program was also informed by a larger focus group of eight parents with an ID. The workshops aimed to help mainstream service providers understand what it is like for parents with an ID using their services. Resources included how to organise meetings for parents with an ID that will allow their active participation and a checklist for writing easy to read documents.

Eight community educator led workshops were conducted in rural and metro areas (4 rural/remote and 4 metro). Surveys were undertaken to ensure stakeholder involvement early in the project and to determine 1. How stakeholders wanted to engage with the project and 2. What stakeholders wanted to find out. A long list of mainstream service providers attended including; Child Safety services, Dental services, Library staff, Family planning services, Salvation army, NDIS staff, and Mission Australia.

Attendees reported outcomes including:

- Increased understanding of the impact of poor practice with attendees making a commitment to change. *"I was so inspired after the last session I've included my own personal goal in my professional learning plan to create/use the template and makes others in the staff more aware"* Teacher Department of Education Tasmania
- Having a better understanding of the importance of listening and valuing parents with an ID
- Understand the importance of letting parents with an ID have more control over their support needs
- At least 8 service providers implemented easy English documents
- An increased understanding of the barriers faced by parents with an ID *"this has been a slap in the face for me, everyone from the receptionist to the lab staff should attend this workshop"* Child Dental Therapist, Tasmania
- An increased confidence in their ability to communicate with parents with an ID following the workshop.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES AND MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS
In a short-term project such as this it can be difficult to gain a clear understanding of just how much participants will benefit in the long-term. Early outcome measures have shown that participants are reporting increased confidence, improved communication skills, improved teamwork-related skills, reduced anxiety levels, improved self-care and hygiene levels, and improved public speaking skills. While these are all clearly positive impacts, extending this project over several years with follow-up measures of employment rates for previous participants, job satisfaction levels, and employer satisfaction being collected and compared to non-participant controls would enable statistical evidence to be gathered on the effectiveness of the project.

The peer educator led presentations and workshops have been well received by businesses and organisations. However, measuring the long-term success of interventions such as this on employment rates can be difficult, with the impact unlikely to be immediate. Indicators of long-term success may only be truly measured by medium and long-term employment figures.

Although the presentations and workshops have been well attended and have been open to attendees from organisations of all sizes, there has been a tendency for larger organisations to be well represented, with small and medium sized employers (who make up 90% of Australia's workforce) less so. This is a pattern that was also reported by Murfitt et al. (2018). It is suggested that getting the message out to small and medium sized employers and breaking down the barriers to encourage employment of people with an intellectual disability in these businesses is vital to achieving sustainable higher rates of employment.

When attempting to measure the success of employment focused projects, it is important to consider both economic and non-monetary benefits. The centre for Disability Studies based at the University of Sydney suggests economic measures of wages earned, hours worked per week, and career advancement, should be measured along with non-monetary outcomes such as inclusion, independence, social status, increased satisfaction, self-confidence, community participation, skill acquisition, psychological well-being, and opportunities to contribute to society (Riches & MacDonald, 2016).

The co-developed resources produced by Speak Out Tasmania and their community educators has the potential to make a significant difference in the lives of parents with an ID, not only throughout Tasmania, but nationally and internationally. An extension of this project could involve, 1) gathering up-to-date baseline measurements of Child Safety Officer interventions, Court appearance numbers and Adoption rates. 2) delivering community educator led workshops and co-developed resources to a large trial area (e.g. NSW, QLD, and TAS). 3) Gathering follow-up figures on Child Safety Officer interventions, Court appearances, and Adoptions rates and reporting on significant differences. This would also allow states not involved in the trial to act as controls.

Finally, producing a consistent list of outcome measures and template for reporting these measures should be considered for future studies to allow statistical analysis of the outcomes overall and between different focus and geographical areas (Table 2). Measures could include, noting the number of small and medium businesses represented at the peer educator led presentations. Performing formal psychosocial evaluations of participants before and after the program to gauge the direction and strength of any psychological changes that may occur. Interviews with family members or carers before and after the program could add reliability to the evaluation of the psychological impact of the program. Table 2 offers a summary of these ideas.

TABLE 2

Suggestions for measures to assist with detailed reporting of employment-based programs

Area of Interest	Suggested Measures
Organisations Represented at workshops	• Range of organisations present • Size of organisations • Number of positions on offer • Types of roles they would consider for someone with ID
Interview with participant (performed before and after participation in program)	• Appearance (unkept/clean/well groomed) • Affect (Positive/Negative) • Mood (Sad/Anxious/Angry/Happy) • Eye contact (Low/average/excessive) • Confidence (Direct question and observational assessment) • Level of community participation
Family member/Carer interview	Enquire about any obvious changes in • Affect • Mood • Behaviour • Skills • Confidence • Social networks

ADDITIONAL BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT ENCOUNTERED DURING PROJECT DELIVERY

1. A Peer Educator had the opportunity to access 5 hours of work in an admin role.
   This would have provided meaningful employment and with a support person assisting the Peer Educator to complete her tasks would have added capacity to the small disability service that offered the position. The Peer Educator is a 39-year-old woman who lives with Down Syndrome. She has a supportive family and is engaged in activities during the week that offer community access and ongoing opportunities in the performing arts and advocacy skill building. The current requirement in disability employment services is a minimum of eight hours. This inflexibility has meant the arrangements could not progress, negatively impacting the person with an ID and the disability service provider.

2. The short timeframe of the Mainstream and Me project presented some barriers to involvement. Significant challenges were faced in terms of encouraging people to seek employment opportunities and surrender their current placements in day services, as they feared they may lose their "spot".

3. One Peer Educator was encouraged to opt out of the Mainstream and Me project by a service provider because it was disruptive to the roster of the support worker. Fortunately, she sought advice and advocacy support was provided for her to assert her right to work.

4. A State Coordinator was required to purchase new clothing for a Peer Educator who had been invited to present at a national meeting in Melbourne. Due to financial reasons, the Peer Educator arrived in clothing that was considered inappropriate for the presentation, highlighting the need for further support and preparation in this regard.

CONCLUSION

The Mainstream and Me project aimed to build capacity and confidence in people with an ID as well as engaging directly with mainstream employers and service providers to break down existing barriers to community inclusion. After 13 months there are clear indicators that these outcomes are being met. Participants are reporting and demonstrating increased confidence, improved communication skills, improved public speaking abilities, higher levels of self-care, and increased team-work abilities. Previous studies have shown that these skills are highly valued by mainstream employers. The feedback from mainstream employers and organisational representatives has also been very positive with many suggesting that having the presentations led by people with an ID helps develop a more inclusive attitude and better understanding of the difficulties faced by parents with an ID. Organisational representatives who attended presentations led by parents with an ID reported an increased awareness of the challenges parents with an ID face and many made a commitment to implement suggestions made during the presentations such as providing easy read documents moving forward. It is suggested that future research should include longitudinal studies to measure the impact that this project has on participants' long-term employment outcomes, psychological well-being, and improved relationships between service providers and parents with an ID.

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Inclusion High5

Checklist

This check list can help you start thinking about making your workplace better for people with disability.

Physical design and environment

People with disability are comfortable and can get easily around because

- ○ There is parking near the entrance
- ○ The aisles are nice and wide
- ○ The floors or footpaths are flat
- ○ There are ramps not steps
- ○ There is plenty of light to see where they are going
- ○ The doors are automatic
- ○ There are working accessible toilets
- ○ It is not too hot or too cold inside
- ○ It is not too noisy

Open and respectful to all

People with disability feel welcome because staff

- ○ Are friendly
- ○ Look at them when they talk to them
- ○ Are happy to help them
- ○ Listen to them and give them time to answer
- ○ Make them feel safe
- ○ Are polite and respectful

Easy to read signage and information

Information is easy to understand and useful because

- ○ Signs are clear with good sized writing
- ○ Signs are well lit
- ○ There is easy read information
- ○ There are signs for toilets, entry and exits, and parking
- ○ People with disability can get more information if they need it

Supportive and friendly attitude

People with disability feel supported because staff

- ○ Ask them if they need help
- ○ Give people with disability physical assistance if they need it
- ○ Are happy to explain things to people with disability
- ○ Smile at people with disability

Disability Awareness

This place is disability aware because

- ○ People with disability work here
- ○ Staff ask if people with disability need help. They do not just assume
- ○ Staff have disability awareness training

If you would like help with making your business more inclusive contact us at **info@nswcid.org.au** or call **1800 424 065.**

The Mainstream And Me

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Inclusion Australia
National Council on Intellectual Disability

2018 ACTION REPORT