



# Queensland Advocacy Incorporated

Our mission is to promote, protect and defend, through advocacy, the fundamental needs and rights and lives of the most vulnerable people with disability in Queensland.

*Systems and Legal Advocacy for vulnerable people with Disability*



## ***Walk the Talk: Realising the 2010-2020 National Disability Strategy and our human rights promises***

### **Highlights**

On Monday 20 March 2017 at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, Queensland Advocacy Incorporated and Griffith University held “*Walk the Talk: Realising the 2010-2020 National Disability Strategy and our human rights promises*”. The forum was held to consider the progress Australia has made and how far we have to go in our implementation of the National Disability Strategy as part of the nation’s commitment to the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability* and within the new paradigm set by the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

**Key speakers** were:

- Alastair McEwin Disability Discrimination Commissioner
- Edward Santow Human Rights Commissioner
- Kevin Cocks AM Anti-Discrimination Commissioner of QLD
- Benedict Coyne President, Australian Lawyers for Human Rights
- Craig Flintoft Representative from the Department of Social Services

Speakers used their lived experiences or the stories of people close to them to address six key National Disability Strategy themes.

- Kath Russell presented the story of **forced co-tenancy** as experienced by her friend, neighbour and sister-in-law Deb to illustrate ‘Inclusive and Accessible Communities’.
- Kym Chomley presented Martin Broad, the latter appearing by video, to speak about sexual expression and the **necessity to amend or repeal section 216** of Queensland’s Criminal Code to highlight ‘Rights Protection, Justice and Legislation’.
- Donna Best supported by Michelle O’Flynn shared her experiences of employment and in particular how she came to be an employee in **Sheltered Workshops** to highlight the need for **meaningfully gained and non-exploitative ‘Economic Security’**.
- Madonna Nicoll talked about young people in **institutional care**, particularly her own experiences and those of other young people in institutional care when they were young to highlight ‘Personal and Community Support’.

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**QAI endorses the objectives, and promotes the principles, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

**Patron: His Excellency The Honorable Paul de Jersey AC**

- Stephanie Gotlib supported Kelly Brooks to share the experience of her child and the use of **restrictive practices in schools** to highlight 'Learning and Skills'.
- Maureen Fordyce from Amparo Advocacy presented the story of **immigrant** Soraya whose identity and life was nearly lost due to a lack of person-centred **culturally** appropriate supports in the Mental Health system.

The set presentations were followed by workshops to determine the achievements of the National Disability Strategy to date; identify the issues still requiring redress; develop strategies to drive change; and commitments to achieve them. Workshop highlights:

#### Accessible and Inclusive Communities

- Culturally appropriate provisions to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to self-direct NDIS supports.
- Training for community organisations in delivering inclusive services and supports
- Housing that meets the cultural and disability support needs of all people with disability

#### Rights Protection Justice and Legislation

- Disability abuse and neglect should have a **separate investigative commissioner**.
- Funding support for volunteer programs like **Citizen Advocacy** so that people are supported in their decision making and are less likely to be forced into the guardianship system.
- Redress discriminatory legislation such as the Queensland Criminal Code Section 216
- Address the disproportionately high rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in jail and dispossessed from their communities.
- A Human Rights Act for Queensland and for Australia.

#### Economic Security

- Impose legislation and **quotas and targets** for the employment of people with disability in open employment
- Phase out 'sheltered workshops' and **more accessible work opportunities**.
- More **training, skills development and job placement** for people with disabilities.
- **Universal Basic Income** for all workers

#### Personal and Community Support

- **Early intervention to support** and services to address underlying causes for criminal actions
- Increase **diversion and non-custodial sentencing** options in criminal justice.
- Offer targeted rehabilitation in detention and **NDIA support for transition from detention**.

- More NDIA support through the **Information, Linkages and Capacity program for self-direction**.
- Cessation of group and congregated living arrangements

### Learning and Skills

- Removal of the dual systems and introduce legislation focused on **mandating inclusive practice and universal design**
- The use of restrictive practices on children is an indication of the failure of the systemic and school-based approach to supporting students with disability and not a failure of the student. It also sends misconceptions about the student to peers and school community, and potentially leads to a life of oppression and restrictions.

### Health and Well-being

- Better **access to disability advocacy**.
- There is a need to instil a holistic approach support for decision-making to health and well-being
- Include compulsory and core units in tertiary studies in working with people with disabilities. Training extended to referral writing by GPs. Training in how to use interpreters, and better understanding of capacity
- For people in detention, move from a reactive complaints model to a proactive and preventative model. Regular **monitoring of prisons, secure mental health facilities**, immigration detention and anywhere that people with disabilities are held.

The *Walk the Talk* forum was a momentous gathering of committed individuals: self-advocates informal advocates, family members, individual advocates, paid advocates, and volunteers. The collective power is awe-inspiring, and this report reflects the commitment and dedication to driving the agenda for change and ensuring that the NDS brings practical realities of the CRPD to every person with disability, their families and supporters and communities.

