



Children and Young People  
with Disability Australia

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The Hon Ronald Sackville AO KC  
Chair of the Royal Commission  
Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with  
Disability  
GPO Box 1422  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

**21st December 2022**

Dear Commissioner Sackville and fellow Commissioners,

Please accept Children and Young People with Disability Australia's *submission on A Vision for an Inclusive Australia* (attached with this letter) as a formal submission into the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission).

Our submission comprises:

- this letter which provides an overview of two events hosted by CYDA with young people with disability about inclusion;
  - 1) Quest for Inclusion event was hosted by CYDA as an interactive in-person activity with three teenagers and;
  - 2) Online consultations x 2 with young people
- a video recording of the Quest for Inclusion event and;
- a report from two consultations held in 2021 on the topic of inclusion.

### **Event # 1 – Quest for Inclusion – interactive event**

CYDA aimed to bring discussions of an accessible and inclusive future to a younger demographic that is not often present during policy discussions. The Quest for Inclusion event involved CYDA facilitating a game of Dungeons and Dragons among a group of three young people with disability (aged 15-17).<sup>1</sup> Dungeons and Dragons focuses on a group of players or 'adventurers' telling a story and solving puzzles as a team. The story of the Quest for Inclusion saw our adventurers tackling challenges to access and inclusion in an engaging fantasy format.

The medium of a role-playing game empowered these young people to engage with challenging themes in a safe and creative environment. The use of fantasy tropes and player characters allowed participants to maintain an element of separation from their own personal experiences. This protects against many of the safety concerns associated with discussions of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://dnd.wizards.com/>

## Key Messages from the Quest for Inclusion

Throughout the narrative campaign (engagement session) CYDA staff posed questions to participants that drew parallels between what was happening in the game and the experiences of participants as young people with disability.

According to our adventurers (young people with disability), we can achieve an inclusive future through:

- Making our physical environments more accessible through ensuring the principles of universal design are enforced across all domains of our society. This will make sure that people with a disability can go to the same places as everyone else.
- Evolving community attitudes towards disability, encouraging people to understand disability as a strength. This includes normalising disability, educating people about disability and ensuring people with a disability have prominent roles in our society.
- Providing more opportunities to people with disability, including support to engage in education and employment.
- Making it easy to access the support that people need (this includes meeting their basic needs, asking for help at school or being able to afford a wheelchair).

## Event # 2 - Consultations with young people on the topic of inclusion

Acknowledging the important role that inclusion plays in the lives of young people with disability is critical to achieving the goals around individual power and autonomy outlined in Australia's Disability Strategy<sup>2</sup>. To understand the experiences and perspectives of young people with disability, CYDA hosted a consultation in August 2021 on 'inclusion and decision making' with six participants and another one in June 2022 on 'inclusion' with nine participants. These consultations were co-designed by an internal working group of young people with disability and culminated in a written report which forms one part of a series of five papers on topics and issues young people deemed important to them. This was called the LivedX series: what young people said.

## Key messages from the LivedX Paper on inclusion

A report summarising participants' contributions forms part of this submission which urges the Disability Royal Commission to shine a light on the exclusion of children and young people with disability across all systems and areas of life. Participants described a range of solutions that would increase inclusion and address current barriers to decision making, and in particular they recommend:

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<sup>2</sup> Commonwealth of Australia. (2021). Available at: [Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 \(disabilitygateway.gov.au\)](https://disabilitygateway.gov.au)

- education and training for community members and service providers on how to support young people with disability in decision making and address bias and power imbalance
- accurate media representations of young people with disability to address ableism and harmful stereotypes that persist in the community
- more opportunities for young people with disability to move into leadership positions – especially in disability organisations.

We urge the Disability Royal Commission to make bold and targeted recommendations to government to maximise individual power and autonomy, and support social inclusion, safety and equality to ensure the rights of children and young people with disability are upheld and that Australia is truly an inclusive society for all its citizens.

If you would like to know more about this submission or CYDA's work, please contact our Policy and Research Manager, Liz Hudson on (03) 9417 1025 or [lizhudson@cyda.org.au](mailto:lizhudson@cyda.org.au).

Kind regards,



Skye Kakoschke-Moore  
Chief Executive Officer