# CYDA delegate speeches at Civil Society CRPD Forum

## Daniel Munter speech transcript:

Before I do begin, if I'm going to give this speech, I want to give it in a way that's important to me and my organisation and would just like to do a couple of things from an accessibility standpoint.

First and foremost, I want to honour the traditional custodians of the lands of which I come from, that being the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations, and want to extend that respect to any Elders who are here with us today on any lands.

From Australia, I also want to pay respect to Indigenous Elders on these lands that we're congregating on today and any Indigenous individuals from lands coming into this space and connecting, and having these discussions.

I'm currently wearing a suit for the first time, probably in two years, and what a day to wear one, but I have a white T-shirt on, a pink tie, wire, silver glasses, and I have short brown hair and fair skin.

Before I get too far into this, I would like to put some content notes in place. I will be speaking about ableism. I will be speaking about discrimination, talking about mental ill health, and theft, especially about wages.

To launch into it, I have a couple of quotes from Einstein that I wanted to talk to before we begin. The first is, and I'm paraphrasing and I apologise, that if you can't explain something simply, you don't truly understand it. So, for the rest of my presentation, I aim to use the simplest words possible.

Secondly, I also wanted to quote another Einstein quote, which is: “doing something over and over the same way and expecting the same result is the definition of insanity.” I feel that is the way that we are approaching the labour market for people with disability. Over and over the statistics have not changed. People with disability are not thriving in our current workplaces and access is harder and harder.

45% of people with disability feel like they have been treated wrong in the workplace. When we look at the systems that govern or the systems that rule, especially in the Australian system, we look to what's called the National Employment Standards. These standards are rules that underpin or are the basis of every employment opportunity in Australia.

In those standards, a person's value, if they are a person with disability, can be quantified and that percentage output can then be placed onto their wage. So that means that in Australia, people with disability can be graded and because they have a disability, they can then have a penalty applied to their wage.

There are only two different identities that can be penalised from a wage perspective in Australia: being a young person and being a person with disability. Now, in Australia, there is a big focus on what's called public benevolent systems. This is just big systems that are meant to help people and we have some great systems in place.

Things like the NDIS, the National Disability Insurance Scheme. It has its problems, don't get me wrong, but it's also brought a lot of help to a lot of people. We have our Disability Support Pension which, again, a lot of people can't access, but for those who do have it, it makes a world of difference.

But there seems to be a trend of continuously funding the same things over and over, and for once I'm here to say it's driving me insane. We are consistently funding capacity-building programs for young people, but the issue isn't with young people. The issue is with the systemic barriers or the things that stop people from being able to get the jobs that they want because employers and big systems are not supporting people with disability.

Under Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disability, we talk about fair and equitable opportunities to get paid the same for the same work. What my country has done is they have taken the idea of same work and they have twisted this idea under the convention.

So what I would like for all of us to think about is: is this the original meaning of the Convention, to make us able to penalise people with disability based on their outputs? Or are we misinterpreting this and does something need to change?

## Emily Unity speech transcript

My name is Emily Unity. My pronouns are they/them. I am an autistic youth advocate representing Children and Young People with Disability Australia.

As a visual description, I’m a small Asian person in my 20s. I’m wearing a black jacket and a green dress with the code from the Matrix movie on it.

I am very excited to speak with you about how young disabled people can build a digital future where there is nothing about us without us.

As young people with disability, we’ve grown up in a physical world that was built by people who aren’t like us. They don’t understand our lived experiences. Therefore, they either can’t or won’t include us in decision-making that affects us.

This exclusion has led to a world that fails to meet our diverse needs. Whether it be barriers to education, employment, or social opportunities, the physical world is often inaccessible, exclusionary, and hard to change.

However, I believe that today's technology presents a unique opportunity to change this narrative for us to build new digital worlds - by us and for us.

As an example, in Australia, I was privileged to work as the Youth Metaverse Project Manager with Meta, the company that owns Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. We co-designed a model for empowering disabled young people to be decision-makers for the digital future.

To do this, we created partnerships between leading organizations specializing in supporting young people, including those of us who are disabled, live with mental health challenges, are LGBTQIA+, are multicultural, or, like me, all these things and more!

Through these partnerships, we assembled a team of intersectional young leaders. Together, we explored emerging technologies, including virtual reality, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence.

We spoke about how many of these things come with a lot of risks and unknowns. But if we become decision-makers, we can proactively ensure that technology serves as a bridge, rather than a barrier.

Over the course of a year, we young leaders co-wrote a report with our model for building our digital future. A future where young people with disabilities are leaders and decision-makers. A future where technology is not just accessible but empowering, a tool for us to use to amplify our strengths and build the world that we need.

However, Australian young people are just one part of the global puzzle. Our model was designed with adaptability in mind. Our hope is that our work can be used as a blueprint for other countries to empower more disabled young leaders.

If you want to read our report or learn more, please message me on LinkedIn, or you can come talk to me later today.

In the words of our Australian young leaders, this is more than just a project. It is an act of care, both for ourselves and future generations.

Thank you for listening, and I look forward to working alongside you to build a digital future where there is nothing about us without us.