JFA Purple Orange

**Submission in response to
the Senate Community Affairs References
Committee inquiry:**

The delivery of outcomes under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 to build inclusive and accessible communities

Submitter details

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About the Submitter

JFA Purple Orange is a non-government, social profit organisation. Anchored on dialogue with people living with disability, their families, service providers, government and other stakeholders, we seek to identify policy and practice that has the prospect of advancing peoples chances of a good life. Our work is anchored on the principles of Personhood and Citizenhood. Our work includes research, evaluation, capacity building, consultancy, and hosted initiatives.

2

Contents

1.0   Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

That the National Disability Strategy be given a reboot, with a well-publicised five-year game plan from July 2017 to June 2022, and including a focus on the Strategy's assertive leadership and reporting

Recommendation 2

That measures to test the effectiveness of the National Disability Strategy must be designed in ways that genuinely and directly connect to the lives of people living with disability who are less visible and/or 'hard to reach'

Recommendation 3

That key components of the NDIS, such as the Specialist Disability Accommodation framework, be properly tested against the values and goals of the National Disability Strategy before any such components are implemented, to avoid the development of service structures (e.g. group homes) that by their nature hinder inclusion

And that the mechanisms for such testing include the membership and perspective of people living with disability

Recommendation 4

That universal design principles be mandated, demanded, and satisfied, before any development of public space or built form is approved

4

Recommendation 5

That decision-making processes relating to the development or refit of built forms should include the membership and perspective of people living with disability

Recommendation 6

That the latter stages of the National Disability Strategy include an auditable focus on systemic reform in public transport so that all of Australia's public transport is genuinely accessible to the disability community

Recommendation 7

That an adequate provision for the costs of accessible taxis be included in the funding plans of those persons whose disability precludes the use of the available public transport in their area

Recommendation 8

That the Australian government champions the availability of mechanisms that make hardware, software and connectivity properly affordable to people living with disability on a low income, so that they can access online communities

Recommendation 9

That the National Disability Strategy be updated to include a specific innovation fund that targets hard-to-reach sections of the disability community

Recommendation 10

That the Australian government ensures there is a National Disability Strategy communications group, that such a group include the membership and perspective of people living with disability, and that such a group lead the development and maintenance of a dynamic public conversation about the imperatives and progress of the National Disability Strategy

Recommendation 11

That the National Disability Strategy be updated to insist that all Australian governments including local governments have auditable, authentic arrangements for identifying and resolving access issues in their jurisdictions

Recommendation 12

That the National Disability Strategy be updated to include a measurement framework that quantifies not only progress towards accessibility but also the impact in terms of the extent that people living with disability are taking up active valued membership in community life.

And that the oversight of such a framework includes the membership and perspective of people living with disability in crafting the framework's design, administration, data collection, data analysis, and reporting

Recommendation 13

That the National Disability Strategy Implementation Reference Group, or a similar new body, whichever has the strongest mandate, be reinstated to provide ongoing feedback and advice on the implementation and impact of the National Disability Strategy

2.0   Introduction

JFA Purple Orange welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's Inquiry into the delivery of outcomes under the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 ('National Disability Strategy') to build inclusive and accessible communities.

JFA Purple Orange is the social policy agency of the Julia Farr group, a trio of social profit, non-government organisations based in South Australia, working to improve the life chances of people living with disability. The Julia Farr group (JFA Purple Orange, Julia Farr Housing Association, and the Julia Farr Trust and Julia Farr MS McLeod Benevolent Funds) and its predecessor organisations have been involved with the disability community, older people and other vulnerable groups for more than 130 years.

We are an independent, non-government organisation that fosters innovation, shares useful information, and promotes policy and practice that support and improve the life chances of people living with disability.

JFA Purple Orange is not a service provider – we deliver research, evaluation and information services anchored upon the stories and experiences shared by people with a lived experience of disability and others in their lives. As such, we feel we are well-positioned to offer comment.

3.0   About our values

The work of JFA Purple Orange is anchored on the principles of *Personhood* and *Citizenhood*. As set out in our Model of Citizenhood Support[1], a good life is characterised by such valued roles (termed Citizenhood) and by the decisions we make (termed *Personhood*). A good life largely depends on the availability of life chances – the assets and opportunities available to a person.

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[1] Williams, R. (2013), *Model of Citizenhood Support: 2nd edition,* Julia Farr Association Inc, Unley South Australia

Unlike formal citizenship of a country, Citizenhood is a dynamic experience: it can rise and fall depending on a person's circumstances. The extent to which any person can naturally take up Personhood and Citizenhood is influenced by the presence of circumstances that can adversely impact on the person's capacity to build authorship of their own lives and the person's capacity to take up valued roles in community life and the economy.

4.0   How the submission was prepared: the use of a survey

This submission is informed by the views of 85 people who completed a tailored survey we created for this submission, augmented by JFA Purple Orange's own views.

The contributing voices to this submission included persons living with disability or psychosocial disability, family members, support workers, and advocacy workers.

Around three quarters of respondents were female, and one quarter were male. The median age group was between 55-64, followed by those in the 46-55 age group. 12% were over 65 years old, 14% between 36-45 years old, and 6% between the ages of 18-25.

Though the majority of respondents were from South Australia, the survey was nationwide and attracted contributors from all Australian jurisdictions except the Northern Territory.

Survey respondents included persons identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and persons from a non-English speaking background.

5.0   Background

The National Disability Strategy commenced in 2010 to support people living with disability to "maximise their potential and participate as equal citizens in Australian society"[2]. It represents a government commitment to a unified, national approach to policy and program development in relation to disability.

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[2] Australian Government 2014, National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/publications-articles/policy-research/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020 Cited April 19, 2017

Importantly, the National Disability Strategy aims to improve the accessibility of mainstream services for people with disability. Access and inclusion are key to people living with disability taking up valued membership of community life as contributing citizens.

In its execution via the governments of Australia, the National Disability Strategy should herald a move away from exclusionary practices so that people living with a disability have a fair go at the resources and opportunities available to other Australians.

The *Shut Out* report, which drove the imperatives within the resulting National Disability Strategy, revealed the devastating extent to which Australians living with disability are denied this fair go[3].

The National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme ('NDIS') are rightly anchored on the goal of valued inclusion in community life.

So while the strategy is a force for good, and developed with good intentions, the question that needs to be asked is what impact has it had on the lives of people living with disability? If the words fail to cause action, then they are merely 'motherhood' statements without practical impact.

Notwithstanding the important work undertaken in establishing the NDIS, this submission highlights how little Australians who either live or work within the disability sector know about the National Disability Strategy; many of those providing input to our submission thought that we were referring to the NDIS.

In assisting people to fully contribute to society, first we need to break down the barriers which exist. Contributors to this submission suggest there is still much that needs to be done to advance accessible, inclusive communities. A number of contributors expressed a sense that not much has changed in Australia since 2010 when it comes to living with disability.

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[3] (2009), Shut Out: The experience of people with disabilities and their families in Australia, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

It is also disappointing that, despite the introduction of Australia's Disability Discrimination Act and building standards during the 90s, Australia continues to wrestle with the issue of access. People continue to report experiences of isolation and exclusion, of poverty, of being 'done to'. Accordingly, this submission explores these issues, and puts forward a number of recommendations to be considered as Australia approaches the latter stages of the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

6.0   Terms of Reference

The full terms of reference as determined by the Community Affairs References Committee were:

1) the planning, design, management, and regulation of:
   a) the built and natural environment, including commercial premises, housing, public spaces and amenities,
   b) transport services and infrastructure, and
   c) communication and information systems, including Australian electronic media and the emerging Internet of things;
2) potential barriers to progress or innovation and how these might be addressed;
3) the impact of restricted access for people with disability on inclusion and participation in economic, cultural, social, civil and political life; and
4) any other related matters.

The terms of reference of the enquiry are very broad and this submission makes a number of recommendations in relation to each of the sections above.

7.0   Two issues straight off the bat

Before addressing the specific terms of reference, JFA Purple Orange makes two observations which it believe the Committee should consider in the overall context of the National Disability Strategy.

7.1 Confusion between the National Disability Strategy and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Even though the National Disability Strategy is the context for the NDIS, it has become overshadowed by the NDIS, which has taken up a lot of stakeholder attention in terms of bilateral agreements, Scheme design, Scheme implementation, and the drama of the numbers – how many people, over what time frame, and at what cost. In our survey, people were confused between the National Disability Strategy and the NDIS.

Even though the NDIS is part of the broader National Disability Strategy, it has in fact blocked out the view of the other essential elements of the National Disability Strategy. The NDIS is primarily about the provision of funded supports to eligible participants. By themselves, these funded supports will not systematically deliver access and inclusion to the broader disability community. It is the National Disability Strategy that should be assertively and loudly leading this, but it is hard to see any real evidence of that or any associated impact.

The National Disability Strategy is not well-reported, so it is hard to assess how the administrators of the National Disability Strategy are measuring and judging their performance. The Commonwealth Government undertook to provide two-yearly progress reports to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) but it appears that the last report was in 2014.

The National Disability Strategy has not been visible enough or assertive enough to demonstrate that progress is being made.

We believe there is an urgent need for greater awareness about the National Disability Strategy, the need for a renewed focus, a refreshed commitment, and a much more visible and dynamic public conversation about progress.

With time running out to 2020, and with the time involved in building up the momentum for active leadership and a much stronger public profile, we recommend the National Disability Strategy be given a reboot, with well-publicised five-year game plan from July 2017 to June 2022.

7.2   The Missing Voices

This submission has aimed first and foremost to capture the views of people living with disability. However, our survey only heard from people who have the capacity to get online and do a survey. Arguably, it is the people living with disability who are hardest to reach – because of disability, location, resources, and congregate support settings – and who are most likely to be excluded. Assessment of the National Disability Strategy's progress needs to find ways to reach them so that their experiences are included in progress reporting.

A few survey participants identified as having family members living with disability that, by the nature of their disability, often mean that they are much more isolated and relegated to the margins of society. One respondent spoke about their son who lives with autism and who was described as having difficulty regulating his behaviour. Respondents felt their son was "rarely catered for in the world of disability". Another respondent who talked about missing out was someone whose family member living with disability was described as "bedbound". In order for the National Disability Strategy to be successful in leading the development of accessible and inclusive communities, it has to be able to reach into the lives of people who are variously described as housebound, bed-bound, etc.

While the survey did attract some respondents who worked in an Australian Disability Enterprise, or lived in a group home or larger residential facility, these respondent numbers were few. This suggests that many people living with disability who are receiving their supports in congregate settings remain beyond the reach of conventional information gathering methods such as this survey. As such, for the National Disability Strategy to have a genuine impact across the disability community, and to genuinely measure the extent of the impact, it has to find ways to directly connect to the lives of people who are 'hard-to-

12

reach'. It is not correct to assume that service agencies are safe conduits for charting the experiences of the people in their care.

This problem was evident in our survey, which attracted a number of responses from people who worked with people living with disability. The pattern of their responses suggested that these respondents struggled to distinguish between their own view of a person's life chances and what that person might say if given the chance.

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Recommendation 2

That measures to test the effectiveness of the National Disability Strategy must be designed in ways that genuinely and directly connect to the lives of people living with disability who are less visible and/or 'hard to reach'

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8.0 Planning, Design, Management and Regulation of the built and natural environment, including commercial premises, housing, public spaces and amenities

This section of this submission explores the management and regulation of planning and design in terms of accessibility for people living with disability. The first part of our tailored survey invited respondents to speak about their living situations, including if they had a choice about where they lived and with whom they lived, and if their homes met their access requirements. This section also asked participants if they could access their local community, as well as the mainstream facilities within that community.

8.1 Living & Accommodation

Around 75% of respondents said their home met their access requirements, which means that one in four said their home was not accessible for their needs.

While the majority of respondents felt safe where they live, around a third said they would change their living arrangements if they could.

44% of respondents of the survey said they live in their own home, and 20% said they lived in a rental property. Given what we have already said about people who are 'hard to reach',

this survey data doesn't reflect those people living in congregate settings such as group or community cluster homes, supported residential facilities, and aged care facilities.

Typically, such congregate settings struggle as gateways into inclusive communities, because the nature of such service models creates distance between the residents and other people in the neighbourhood; such venues are not seen as regular homes but as service venues, facilities, institutions and, as such, impede the emergence of ordinary neighbourly connections so essential to inclusive communities

Such models remain the dominant service form for people living with disability not living with their families, and choice is subjugated by the perceived economics of the model.

> *"Few Australians without disability can imagine what it would be like to have no say in where they live or who they live with. The freedom to choose where and with whom one lives is a fundamental freedom, but it is one few people with disability are able to exercise…"4*

In general, Australians are not told where to live or who to live with. The experience continues to be different for people living with disability, and it is hard to see what impact the National Disability Strategy has had. Our survey respondents echoed the importance of people having choice. Some respondents talked about wanting to live somewhere where their surrounding amenities such as shopping centres and cafes were accessible. Some spoke about moving for the business of the city, or to the quietness of country life.

As stated earlier, around one third of respondents would choose to change their accommodation arrangements if they had the choice, and this is from respondents who by and large do not live in group settings. However, some respondents were in congregate settings. For example, one respondent said they would prefer to return to their own home, a home they had made significant investment in, including environmental sustainability features. They stated that it was only due to the limited choice of current service responses to their disability that they had to relinquish their own home.

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[4] Commonwealth of Australia, 2009, Shut Out Report 28

Of particular concern are NDIS practical arrangements which include a housing development component termed the Specialist Disability Accommodation framework ('SDA') that systematically curtails choice if a person's lived experience of disability is beyond a particular threshold, beyond which independent accessible living is seen as too expensive for the Scheme. In such circumstances, the NDIS participant will be expected to make use of Specialist Disability Accommodation which, in the main, will likely be of a congregate nature.

As stated earlier, congregate support services by their nature are not best equipped to advance access and inclusion in communities. They are identified by most stakeholders, including people in mainstream community life, as service venues (be they home-based, work-based or recreation-based) and neither naturally precipitate inclusive practices nor advance an image of people living with disability as valued contributing members of mainstream community life.

Recommendation 3

That key components of the NDIS such as the Specialist Disability Accommodation framework, be properly tested against the values and goals of the National Disability Strategy before any such components are implemented, to avoid the development of service structures (e.g. group homes) that by their nature hinder inclusion

And that the mechanisms for such testing include the membership and perspective of people living with disability

8.2 Access to Community and Public Spaces

In 2009, the *Shut Out* report spoke about how people living with disability felt forgotten, particularly when it came to trying to access community[5]. Access and the freedom to move around in one's community and other public spaces is a basic and arguably fundamental right that most Australians take for granted. For the last 50 years, various building codes have been developed and progressed in the attempt to build an inclusive society accessed

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[5] Shut Out p 52

by all. However, despite the introduction of Australian standards such as AS1428 Access and Mobility Standards[6], we are still witnessing the building and refurbishing of buildings which are not providing universal access to all – particularly people living with disability.

The United Nations says accessibility is not only "an inherent right" of people living with disability, but also gives people the fundamental freedom to "participate fully in society on equal terms with others"[7]. Over 75% of our survey respondents believed that they would have the capacity to contribute to their community if there was better access.

Most respondents spoke about the issues of inaccessible communities and how they believed it should be compulsory that all buildings be made properly accessible. Respondents also said public transport accessibility need to be improved, for example that buses should have an audio function that would alert passengers that their stop is coming up. This feature would be helpful to blind people and also helpful to people using wheelchairs who can't see when their bus stop is coming up because they are instructed to sit facing the back of the bus for their safety. It would also be useful to people living with cognitive impairment (because of intellectual disability or acquired brain injury) with the additional audio information giving confidence about when to get off the bus.

Others spoke about general physical accessibility of communities. Many made reference to their local areas not always having curbs with ramps and the need for improved widened footpaths and road crossings for those who use wheelchairs. Respondents also raised issues about access to retail venues (including shopping aisles, changing rooms, etc), cafes and entertainment venues, and better access to sporting facilities, such as accessible heated swimming pools. Despite Australia having the Disability Discrimination Act and Accessible Building Codes Standards since the 1990s, our survey revealed a multitude of access issues.

Another respondent mentioned the increasing numbers of high counters in public offices and buildings, with no part of the counter at a suitable height for communication with someone who uses a wheelchair.

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[6] https://www.disabilityaccessconsultants.com.au/australian-standards-overview/ Cited March 27, 2017
[7] United Nations [2015] Access and Development: Mainstreaming disability in the post-2015 development agenda p3

The respondents in this submission have highlighted that there are still many inaccessible public spaces despite introducing laws that all new buildings have universal access. There needs to be stronger and more stringent mechanism of accountability to builders and businesses who do not comply.

Accordingly, we believe universal design principles should be mandatorily applied to all commercial premises, housing, public spaces and amenities. *Universal design* refers to broad-spectrum ideas meant to produce buildings, products and environments that are inherently accessible to everyone[8].

Society should no longer see accessibility as an aspirational goal, but as an achievable reality that can be insisted upon now. In addition to the benefits this will bring in terms of human rights, it will also bring economic savings through avoiding more expensive retrofits later on.

Recommendation 4

That universal design principles be mandated, demanded, and satisfied, before any development of public space or built form is approved

In the implementation of this recommendation, diligent oversight will be key. Therefore, the decision-making process in relation to any such developments needs to include the membership and perspective of people living with disability.

Recommendation 5

That decision-making processes relating to the development or refit of built forms should include the membership and perspective of people living with disability

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[8] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_design

9.0   Transport Services and Infrastructure

Many survey respondents spoke about having to rely on specially-adapted taxis as their only means of transport, as they cannot or do not have access to public transport.   A number of these respondents said that this was a major barrier for them in accessing their community because they could not afford to catch enough taxis which would enable them to participate in their community at the level they might otherwise like to.

For people unable to afford/drive a car, public transport is absolutely a key element in providing access to inclusive communities. It follows that the public transport itself needs to be properly accessible. Currently, it isn't.

Therefore, the latter stages of the National Disability Strategy should include a time-framed focus on systemic reform in public transport so that all of Australia's public transport is genuinely accessible to the disability community. This is particularly important in terms of mass transport such as buses and trains. However, it is also important to ensure that all taxis are accessible, not just a special small sub fleet. If cities the size of London can accomplish a fully accessible taxi fleet, no less should be expected of Australia's cities and towns.

These arrangements, especially in mass passenger transport, will help reduce the disproportionate cost burden placed on people living with disability to access their local community.

Recommendation 6

That the latter stages of the National Disability Strategy include an auditable focus on systemic reform in public transport so that all of Australia's public transport is genuinely accessible to the disability community

Where such use necessarily includes accessible taxis, it is important the person is sufficiently resourced, via the NDIS or comparable funding mechanisms such as injury insurance, to cover the costs of such necessary use.

Recommendation 7

That an adequate provision for the costs of accessible taxis be included in the funding plans of those persons whose disability precludes the use of the available public transport in their area

10.0   Communication and Information Systems:

This section explores the way people living with disability interact and use communication and information systems – including their use of electronic media and the Internet. It also explores some of the factors that mean that people living with disability are more likely to use social media to fulfil the needs and sense of belonging that perhaps differ from those of people who don't live with disability.

85% of survey participants said they had adequate access to electronic media and the internet, the remainder said they did not.

Around 56% of respondents said that work is a key reason for going online. Around 26% said study, while around 65% said social connections[9].

It is worth recalling at this point that this survey was completed online by self-selected respondents. Even among this net-savvy group around 15% had issues accessing online opportunities. This might suggest that there are much more significant online access issues for other sections of the disability community.

When asked what might improve their access to electronic media and the internet, 50% of respondents made reference to affordability of not only costs associated to connecting to the internet, but also items such as Smart Phones, computers, laptops and iPad etc., which enable participants to access the internet. We think these issues of affordability, in terms of both hardware and connectivity, are likely to extend throughout the disability community.

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[9] these percentages add up to more than 100% because respondents could give more than one response

19

Affordability is an important issue, given the social connectivity that an online presence can offer. Many people use online platforms to stay connected with family and friends, and also meet new people with similar interests. Because they are currently more likely to be on low incomes compared to most other Australians, many people living with disability are more vulnerable to affordability issues re online access. This is especially troubling given that many people living with disability are more socially isolated, with fewer and less diverse social networks, compared to most other Australians.

Given that social media access is a growing element in how Australians maintain and extend their social networks, it can be assumed that if people living with disability are able to access and participate in social media, this might be an effective way to build greater connectivity and reduce the sense of loneliness and isolation.

We also note 43% of survey respondents said their use of social media was related to not being able to physically access their community, either because of inadequate supports or because of accessibility issues.

This suggests that while it is important to ensure that Australians living with disability have the same opportunities to access online communities, this cannot be seen as the antidote to problems of access to real communities.

Nevertheless, the issue of affordability needs to be addressed, so that people living with disability have access to online communities. We believe the Australian government should champion the availability of subsidies, discounts and related mechanisms, so that hardware, software and connectivity are genuinely affordable to people living with disability on a low income.

Recommendation 8

That the Australian government champions the availability of mechanisms that make hardware, software and connectivity properly affordable to people living with disability on a low income, so that they can access online communities

11.0 Potential barriers to progress or innovation and how these might be addressed

11.1 Connecting to 'hard-to-reach' demographics

Survey respondents identified a number of barriers to progress or innovation, namely lack of training and information for people living with disability. The barriers are seen as greater for people living with intellectual disability, Aboriginal people and people from CALD backgrounds.

A true test of a system is its capacity to work well for the people who need it most. For our communities to be truly accessible and inclusive, they have to work for those people living with disability who are the hardest to reach.

And in building that system, we think it follows that progress and innovation will come from connecting into those hard-to-reach demographics.

Therefore, we think the National Disability Strategy should be refined to include a specific innovation fund that targets hard-to-reach sections of the disability community. The ideas and innovations that can emerge for this group are likely to also work well for the broader disability population.

Recommendation 9

That the National Disability Strategy be updated to include a specific innovation fund that targets hard-to-reach sections of the disability community

11.2 The relative quiet of the National Disability Strategy

While we value the existence of the National Disability Strategy and the important and sincere intentions it represents, we don't have a sense of its implementation.

There is infrequent coverage and dialogue about the National Disability Strategy, and a lack of visible leadership. Yet this is exactly what is needed if there is to be momentum towards raising awareness and practical actions in support of its goals.

This problem may in part due to the gravitational pull of the NDIS. In relation to disability issues, the media coverage, the conferences, the conversations, the reporting, are orientated towards the NDIS.

While understandable, this is not acceptable. For the National Disability Strategy to come alive, it needs to be present and alive in public conversations, and it needs more frequent reporting on progress.

We recommend the Australian government ensures there is a National Disability Strategy communications group, that such a group include the membership and perspective of people living with disability, and that such a group lead the development and maintenance of a dynamic public conversation about the imperatives and progress of the National Disability Strategy.

A constant dialogue, regular media coverage, examples of progress and good stories would help to build momentum and reinforce the importance of the National Disability Strategy as the responsibility of all.

Recommendation 10

That the Australian government ensures there is a National Disability Strategy communications group, that such a group include the membership and perspective of people living with disability, and that such a group lead the development and maintenance of a dynamic public conversation about the imperatives and progress of the National Disability Strategy

12.0   The Impact of restricted access on inclusion and participation

Based on our general work, together with the feedback from respondents in our survey, we conclude there is a considerable distance to travel before Australia can say it has accessible inclusive communities.

As set out elsewhere in this submission, access remains problematic. Given that access is key to an active productive life – most Australians are using transport systems to get to work, and most Australians access built or landscaped forms to undertake work, leisure, etc – it is reasonable to conclude that if Australia still has significant inaccessibility for people living with disability, then the impact is that people living with disability are far less likely to access work, recreations and other valued opportunities in community life.

In contemplating the priorities for rectifying this, our respondents again referenced transport, the built form, and, perhaps most importantly, the need for all governments in Australia, including local government, to have authentic mechanisms where accessibility issues can be named, examined, and acted on.

It should not have to fall, as it currently does, to people living with disability to "be left to enforce compliance", when in many instances people living with disability are "the most disempowered, oppressed, undereducated and vulnerable people in society"[10].

Therefore, we believe the National Disability Strategy should be updated to insist that all Australian governments have auditable, authentic arrangements for identifying and resolving access issues in their jurisdiction.

Recommendation 11

That the National Disability Strategy be updated to insist that all Australian governments including local governments have auditable, authentic arrangements for identifying and resolving access issues in their jurisdictions

In a similar vein, we think there needs to be a stronger framework for measuring progress of the National Disability Strategy, especially in terms of impact in the lives of people living with disability. The framework should not only be capable of quantifying advances made in accessibility, and where the problems still lie, but also be capable of measuring the impact of such accessibility on inclusion.

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[10] deindividualised responses within the survey JFA Purple Orange conducted for this submission

We think the sample measurement framework in the Model of Citizenhood Support could be a useful starting point for measuring such impact[11].

Recommendation 12

That the National Disability Strategy be updated to include a measurement framework that quantifies not only progress towards accessibility but also the impact in terms of the extent that people living with disability are taking up active valued membership in community life.

And that the oversight of such a framework includes the membership and perspective of people living with disability in crafting the framework's design, administration, data collection, data analysis, and reporting

We note the loss of the National Disability Strategy Implementation Reference Group which was set up and heralded by the Commonwealth government at the time as a 'critical step in providing collaborative and expert advice and information to government on issues relating to the implementation of the National Disability Strategy.[12] JFA Purple Orange understands the Group only met twice before it was disbanded in 2013, leaving the National Disability Strategy without any advisory structure or link to the disability sector outside the commonwealth government National Disability Strategy officials.

We recommend the reinstatement of the independent Reference Group, or a comparable new body, whichever has the strongest mandate, to provide ongoing feedback and advice on the implementation and impact of the National Disability Strategy, and that this body includes the membership and perspective of people living with disability. This would go some way to ensuring the Strategy's recognition that governments 'need to listen to people

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[11] Williams, R. (2013) op cit
[12] http://www.formerministers.dss.gov.au/11916/ramping-up-accessible-information-and-representation-for-people-with-disability/

with disability, their families and carers to better understand their needs, the barriers they face and how to work together to improve participation and life outcomes.'[13]

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Recommendation 13

That the National Disability Strategy Implementation Reference Group, or a similar new body, whichever has the strongest mandate, be reinstated to provide ongoing feedback and advice on the implementation and impact of the National Disability Strategy

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13.0   Concluding remarks

Accessible and, more deeply, inclusive communities are key to people living with disability taking up valued membership of community life as contributing citizens. The Shut Out report revealed the extent to which Australians living with disability do not have access and are excluded.

The National Disability Strategy and NDIS are rightly anchored on the goal of valued inclusion in community life, and the strategy has the potential to create accessible and inclusive communities.

However, it is not making sufficient progress, and needs a significant reboot to bring genuine leadership to the critical issues of access and inclusion.   This reboot needs to include a more dynamic pubic conversation about the imperatives and progress relating to accessible and inclusive communities, and the membership and perspective of people living with disability in the oversight of the Strategy and its activities.

14.0   Further Information

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[13] https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/01_2013/nds_summary_report-41.pdf

We would welcome the opportunity to provide additional information as required. We would also value the opportunity to meet with the Senate Community Affairs References Committee to discuss the submission contents in more detail.

For further information about this submission, please contact:

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