



Disability Australia consortium calls for unity among people with disability organisations

A statement from the Disability Australia consortium

Today the Assistant Minister for Social Services, Minister Fifield, issued a statement announcing funding for a cross disability alliance of five people with disability organisations, stating that the new alliance would represent 'all people with disability' and noting alignment with a social model of disability and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

This statement is divisive and misleading. Whilst we welcome funding to the five organisations for people with disability, they do not represent our 200,000 constituents. The UNCRPD makes it clear that people with disability should freely choose their own representatives - it is not the role of any government to tell people with disability who should represent us.

To you, our members, we will continue to represent your interest to the best of our ability.

Our organisations know that people with disability relate to people who have had similar life experiences. We know that people who are blind best learn how to become empowered, confident and independent by being around people who have developed these skills. Many people who are Deaf like to be represented by organisations that understand Auslan and Deaf culture.

There is an important role to be played by both population based organisations as well as people with disability organisations who provide specialist information, advocacy and peer support to people who are newly diagnosed with disability, people who acquire a disability and families.

The divisive decision by the government to defund seven people with disability organisations and not grant funding to a further four people with disability organisations, including autism which is one of the fastest growing disabilities, announced before Christmas is an unprecedented attack on people with disability organisations in Australia.

Our organisations, with over 200 years of combined experience, have been integral to the successful implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the development of the UNCRPD, captioning, accessible voting for people who are blind or vision impaired and the development of early intervention to support children with autism and Down syndrome. Without our organisations, these successes may not have come to pass. These successes have made fundamental differences to the lives of people with disability.

We have and will continue to be representative and effective champions of and for people with disability and to be a resource to our members now and into the future. Our organisations will continue to drive change in the best interests of people with disability without fear or favour.

To our constituents, we look forward to representing you, as the national independent voice of people with disability in Australia.

Please direct all media enquiries to Mr Matthew Wright on 0428 608 861.