Workshop 1 – NSW Disability Inclusion Plan

Portside Convention Centre   
Kent St Sydney   
23 April 2015   
9.30am - 2.30pm

Attendees included 34 nominated representatives from NSW Government agencies   
and 3 representatives from the Disability Council NSW with responsibility or involvement in the development of agency Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs).

Attendees also included a range of guest speakers and expert panel members   
with lived experience of disability. The workshop was facilitated by Alison Wallace, Executive Partner, Urbis.

Margaret Crawford, Deputy Secretary Corporate Services Family and Community Services (FACS) opened the workshop with an overview of the accountability and responsibility for the development of the DIAP within FACS and recognised the importance and benefits of embedding disability inclusion within the NSW Public Sector.

**Session One – Expert Panel**

The expert panel included:

* Jane Selwood – Law and Justice FACS
* Colin Jensen – Community Inclusion FACS
* Suzanne Colbert AM – Chief Executive Officer, Australian Network on Disability
* Professor Simon Darcy – Events, Sport and Tourism, UTS Business School

The panel members addressed the four focus areas in the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan: Liveable Communities, Employment, Attitudes and Behaviours, and Systems   
and Processes.

Jane Selwood

Jane introduced the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (DIA) and outlined the requirements under the DIA. Jane highlighted how the Act includes a focus on principles for those experiencing intersectional disadvantage. She highlighted that the DIA requires active consultation with people with disability in developing Disability Inclusion Action Plans.

The requirement that DIAPs be provided to the Disability Council NSW provides a unique opportunity to receive useful input from the Council. The opportunity also exists for Departments to do their planning collaboratively. Changes are being made under the NSW Annual Reports (Departments) Regulation 2010 to reflect DIA requirements.

Colin Jensen

Colin highlighted the crucial need for accessible systems and processes and how people with disability can feel isolated, devalued and embarrassed by having to rely   
on colleagues to input details into HR and payroll systems. This reliance on colleagues to input, for example bank account details, because of inaccessible IT systems can have privacy and human rights implications.

Over Colin’s professional working life in the Australian and NSW Public Sector he has found that general awareness of disability issues and positive attitudes amongst his work colleagues has been crucial in his work performance and productivity. Colin relies on the assistance – borrowing the eyes - of his work colleagues on a daily basis. A half a minute of their time has exponential impact on his productivity and effectiveness.

Professor Simon Darcy

Simon discussed the idea that reducing social isolation is critical whether that be for living, working or playing. Meaningful community engagement needs to be addressed for all types of disability involving appropriate levels of support, including recognising those who may never be in paid employment. In the time away from work you need   
to make life enriching and joyous. To be able to achieve this outcome people must   
be able to access the community through seamless integration from their house to   
the local community, through transport to regional hubs, interstate, national and international travel.

Simon spoke about the importance of providing information in a way that understands the different strategies that people with disability use to access it. Quite often government knows about wicked problems that fall across jurisdictions and must take ownership of those issues through coordinated responses. The Disability Inclusion Act provides an opportunity to rethink access and provision across jurisdictions, and design and create innovative transforming solutions.

Suzanne Colbert

Suzanne outlined the need to build relevance because people with disability are seen as marginal and the importance needs to be raised to make inclusion a mainstream issue. We need to develop shared understanding of what it means to make life equitable for people with disability because one in three people has or is close to someone with disability.

Suzanne spoke about the need to restructure systems to fully include people with disability and the need for people with disability to be empowered.

In formulating DIAPs we need to be clear on who are ‘people with disability’ and that   
the scope of these plans is beyond specialist service delivery.

**Session Two - Engaging the Executive and People with Disability**

The panel included:

* Julie Lonsdale – Associate Director, People & Culture, Department of Premier & Cabinet
* Louise Bannerman – Sydney University Student Services
* Yaz Camdizc – Sydney University student
* Diana Qian – Senior Policy Officer, Secretariat, Disability Council NSW
* Alanna Julian, Wendy Potter and Zhila Hasanloo – Living Life My Way Ambassadors

Julie Lonsdale

Julie spoke on the process of engaging the Executive and getting high level commitment and support for disability planning within the organisation. Julie highlighted that ignorance is alive and well and that more often than not discrimination on the grounds of disability in the workplace is an ignorance based failing.

Employers are not always aware of the resources and tools available to them to support an employee with disability. Julie added that her department found that engaging their executives to champion the awareness campaign was the most effective strategy.

Louise Bannerman & Yaz Camdizc

Louise Bannerman and Yaz Camdizc spoke about the process by which Sydney University produced its DIAP. This included a steering committee, a wide range of stakeholders, students and staff representatives. Yaz highlighted that consultation   
was on-going rather than a once only process. They highlighted the need for executive sponsorship and how Vice Chancellor Michael Spence championed the DIAP at its launch and raised the question of how universities can open their doors to the community including people with intellectual disability.

Yaz stressed the importance of accessible consultation processes for people with disability adding that it needs to be fully accessible otherwise people will not believe   
it is a genuine consultation.

Diana Qian

Diana Qian described the role of the Disability Council and how it is now tasked with receiving and advising on DIAPs. She mentioned some of the common issues that beset the process of consulting people with disability such as inaccessible information, insufficient turnaround time to consider input and lack of diversity within the groups consulted.

Developing an engagement strategy and planning your questions will support an effective consultation process, particularly if there is a focus on workable solutions rather than identifying the issues.

Alanna Julian

Alanna spoke of her experiences in regards to confronting language and that when she discloses that she is a person with an intellectual disability and needing help that some frontline staff are confronted by this and feel ill-equipped to assist. Alana provided some great examples of simple solutions in her “Be Talk” and how people can make it easier to communicate through actions such as openness, consideration and clarity.

Zhila Hasanloo

Zhila spoke from a perspective of a person from a CALD background with disability. Zhila emphasised that as a person with low vision a number of considerations need   
to be made for effective consultation, specifically stressing that producing partial documents in Braille does not suffice. She added that all information not just one   
or two of the documents must be accessible.

Wendy Potter

Wendy spoke of her persistence over many years and that now, for the first time, Wendy has choice and control over her support arrangements and can live as independently as possible. She is active in her community and is a member of ParaQuad NSW, Physical Disability Council of NSW, St George Association and   
a life member of People with Disabilities Australia.

**Session Three – Tools, templates and ideas**

In this session, there was table discussion and reporting back on what participants saw as easy and quick wins and what actions were perceived as challenging in developing   
a DIAP. The following are potential tools and ideas to assist agencies in DIAP development.

1. A template for a generic disability inclusion plan
2. A conversation guide / starter to commence consultation across agencies about disability inclusion
3. Collaborative planning – how can collaboration be supported in the consultation and planning processes?
4. How can consultation be co-ordinated so that disability groups and or individuals are not overly taxed and best utilized?
5. Developing the business case at an agency level for disability inclusion – workshop, resources tips to support agencies