

Aspect's Response to the Promoting Inclusion Issues Paper Summary

Disability Royal Commission

Submitted May 2021

What is the Disability Royal Commission about?

This Royal Commission is called the **Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability**.

We call it the Disability Royal Commission.

The Disability Royal Commission wants to know about people with disability and their experience of

- **violence** – if someone's body is being hurt by someone else
- **abuse** – if someone is being treated badly
- **neglect** – if someone is not being helped in the way they are supposed to be
- **exploitation** – if someone is being taken advantage of

Introduction

The Disability Royal Commission wrote a paper called the **Promoting Inclusion Issues Paper (Issues Paper)**.

The Issues Paper asked people to give the Disability Royal Commission information about

- what inclusion means to them
- if they think that Australia is good at inclusion.

Inclusion means

- everyone is included with the supports they need
- everyone can take part in our community as equals
- everyone can use the things in the community like
 - transport
 - buildings and places
 - information
 - services
 - websites

Inclusion is good for everyone.

This document tells you what Aspect wrote to the Disability Royal Commission in plain English.

What questions did the Issues Paper ask?

The Issues Paper talks about how people with disability are treated when a community does inclusion.

The Issues Paper asked questions like

- What do you think makes a community do inclusion?

- How have you felt included at different times in your life?
- How can a community that does inclusion support the rights of a person with disability?
- What affects the experience of people with disability?

People can have different experiences based on their

- Age
 - Sex – whether your body is male or female or intersex
 - Gender identity – who you feel you are as a person
 - Sexual orientation – the gender identity or identities who you feel attraction or romantic love towards
 - Culture or background – your way of life and what is important to you because of how you grew up
 - Location of where you live
 - Language that you speak
 - Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage
- What stops the community from doing inclusion?
 - What can the government and organisations do to help the community do inclusion?

How did Aspect respond to the Issues Paper?

People and organisations do not have to respond to the Issues Paper. It is a choice.

We wrote back about the Issues Paper to the Disability Royal Commission in May 2021.

We wrote about the following topics.

About Aspect

We wrote about what we do at Aspect like

- Aspect's **services**
- Our research – **Aspect Research Centre for Autism Practice (ARCAP)**
- Our **inclusion reference groups and committees** – these are groups of people who help us to be more inclusive. They are called the
 - Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
 - Pride Committee
 - **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and other sexual and gender identities (LGBTQIA+) Advisory Committee**
 - **Disability Access and Inclusion Plan** Committee
 - Multicultural Committee
 - **Aspect Think Tank**

We spoke to the people in our inclusion reference groups and committees to help us write this response.

We asked them to tell us what they think about these 3 questions.

1. What makes people on the autism spectrum feel like their community does inclusion?
2. What are the key problems people on the autism spectrum deal with?
3. What do we know is useful or works to have inclusion for people on the autism spectrum?

What makes people on the autism spectrum feel like their community does inclusion

The people in our inclusion reference groups and committees talked about 2 main areas that feel like their community does inclusion.

1. Welcoming attitudes and behaviours of others

Attitudes are what you

- think
- feel
- believe.

Welcoming attitudes and behaviours respect and celebrate all the ways that you are different.

Welcoming attitudes and behaviours of others can help you

- feel valued and respected
- have access to things to do or things to use
- join in and share what you know or can do
- talk to people in the way that works for you.

2. Accessible places and things

When something is accessible then everyone can use it.

One way of making somewhere or something accessible is to use universal design.

Universal design makes sure that the place or thing can be used by most people without any changes.

Our inclusion reference groups and committees said that accessible environments

- show that it is good to use supports
- care about inclusion
- do not treat people differently because of who they are
- ask people with disability how they can help
- give people with disability jobs to work with them
- pay people with disability to talk about what people with their disability might need.

We told the Disability Royal Commission about what ARCAP found in research about autism and inclusion.

The research tells us what works best like having

- inclusion in the design of the environment
- the right supports that the person needs
- the right amount of supports

- other people who know about autism and have welcoming attitudes and behaviours.

The research tells us that these things work best in all different times of people's life.

What are the key problems people on the autism spectrum deal with

A problem is something that stops you or is in the way.

Problems can be

- hurtful or attitudes that are not welcoming
- discrimination – this is when you are treated unfairly because you are different
- places or things that are not accessible
- Australian laws that do not include rules about inclusion
- Places or businesses that do not treat inclusion as a priority.

Our research found if you are left out of 1 place in your community it can make it hard to be included in a different community place.

Being included is what happens for you when your community does inclusion.

Being included is a human right.

Many problems to inclusion exist because inclusion is not treated like a human right in all places.

Sometimes you may know you are being left out because you feel like you do not fit in.

Some problems people on the autism spectrum have are

- not able to join in to learn at school
- not enough health care
- it is hard to get and keep a job.

Many people with a disability have to speak up to be included because of discrimination.

It can be harder for people who have both problems because of

- disability
- other things about them.

Some other things that people can have discrimination about can be

- age
- language
- culture
- where you live
- gender
- sexual orientation
- citizenship status – this is the country you belong to
- First Nations status.

What do we know is useful or works to have inclusion for people on the autism spectrum?

The research told us 5 things that help for inclusion of people on the autism spectrum

- work together with everyone who supports you
- supports and services think about you and your needs to make it work for you

This is called being person-centred.

- staff and support organisations learn and know about autism
- make changes to the environment or place to remove problems or help inclusion
- teach other people about autism so they can show welcoming behaviours and attitudes.

Our inclusion reference groups and committees talked about how it is important to

- be part of decisions.

Some of the ways Autistic people can be part of decisions are to

- have jobs as leaders or bosses who make decisions
- be asked about your life
- work as part of a team to make, research or design something.
- have universal design as it helps everyone.

People without a disability also find universal design helpful.

- think about your culture and your needs to feel safe for your culture.

Aspect's Inclusion journey

Aspect works to be better at inclusion.

Aspect has an **Embracing Diversity** policy.

At Aspect we **work in partnership with people on the autism spectrum** to

- design and deliver our services using the **ACA**.
- **do research in partnership at ARCAP**
- learn about your needs using the
 - **Aspect Advisory Council**
 - Aspect Think Tank
 - **Aspect School Student Representative Councils (SRC)**
 - employment of Inclusion Advisors and other Autistic people
 - Aspect **Disability Access and Inclusion** plan that was developed in partnership with the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN)
 - **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/gender diverse, Queer & questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic and other gender or sexuality diversity (LGBTQIA+)** plan
 - **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People** Reconciliation Action Plan

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Acknowledgement & Commitment policy**
- **Multicultural Community Engagement Plan**

We talk about our services and support Autistic people to be involved.

For example we

- use the of Acknowledgement of Country and Inclusion Statements at all important meetings
- have **information about Aspect in easy read**
- tell you how to **access information in other languages**
- have an Aspect Autistic Employees' Network
- have an Autistic Communications Working Group to help design what we talk about

We help the community to learn about autism. For example

- the **We Belong and We Belong Too** research program
- **a different brilliant®** podcast
- **Blogs, videos** and **articles** written by people on the autism
- Our work with our **Strategic Partners**
- Our work with business and community to make an **Autism Friendly Australia**

You can learn more about our **Autism Friendly Framework** at the end of this document.

- **Positive Partnerships** which makes training and resources for
 - school aged children
 - culturally and linguistically diverse communities
 - First Nations communities.

Recommendations and conclusion

The people in Aspect's inclusion reference groups and committees say Australia is not good at inclusion.

We agree with the people in our inclusion reference groups and committees.

Australia needs to change big and small things to do better inclusion.

Australia can do more actions to make Australian communities and businesses have

- universal design
- welcoming attitudes and behaviours
- high value for inclusion
- helpful ideas for what works for inclusion
- enough money to spend on inclusion

We welcome you to contact us if you want to talk about this document more.

What will the Disability Royal Commission do with our response?

The Disability Royal Commission will use the information we gave them to:

- complete their work
- decide if they want to ask us for more information
- share information.

Aspect's Autism Friendly Framework

Aspect's **Autism Friendly Environments** Framework is how Aspect works with businesses and the community.

Aspect made the Autism Friendly Environments Framework from

- our knowledge
- listening to Autistic people
- learning from research
- looking at universal design

This framework is can be used anywhere. For example in

- airports
- shops
- museums
- events
- zoos
- offices.

When we work with the community and businesses there are 3 main steps to the Autism Friendly Framework.

1. Look

2. Talk

3. Change

1. Look

We start with a look at where we want to use the Autism Friendly Environments Framework.

The Autism Friendly Environments Framework has 8 areas to look at.

1. Welcoming attitudes and behaviours

2. Information about what to expect

3. How you can see where to go or find something

4. What the place feels like for your senses

Your senses are how your body can tell

- what you
 - see
 - smell
 - taste
 - touch or feel
 - hear
- where your body is

- how your body moves
5. How you can communicate in a way that works for you
 6. Where there can be any problems and how to get help
 7. Staff training
 8. When and how to look again to find things to do better.

We use a team to look for these 8 areas.

The team always has

- a person on the autism spectrum
- a person who knows about autism

2. Talk

We talk to the community or business about what we find.

We talk about in each of the 8 areas

- what works well
- what can be done better.

3. Change

We help the community or business to find changes to be better at inclusion.

Changes can be to

- have better universal design

- help someone on the autism spectrum.