Ms Suzanne Orr MLA

Member for Yerrabi

Via email: orr@parliament.act.gov.au

4 October 2023

Dear Ms Orr,

Thank you for providing AFI the opportunity to provide feedback on the revised draft of the *Disability Inclusion Bill 2023*. We are genuinely excited about the draft Bill's potential impact in promoting planning for inclusion by agencies for people with disability in priority inclusion areas.

AFI supports the *Disability Inclusion Bill 2023* as an important step in providing a framework towards inclusion and accessibility through Disability Inclusion Strategies and Disability Inclusion Plans.

The Government is already committed to delivering, fully funding and implementing its ACT Disability Health Strategy, the Disability Strategy, and the Inclusive Education Strategy as well as continuing the ACT Disability Justice Strategy. The true test of these will be in the movement from intent to delivery including via investments, allocations of time and resources within agencies and policy changes as well as strong evaluation frameworks.

Your Bill provides a welcome opportunity to enshrine them within a framework and to ensure that they are ongoing.

We note that the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability was released on Friday. It recommends enshrining an equivalent to its proposed national Disability Rights Act into State and Territory laws.

Our reading, in the relatively short time we’ve had with the Commission report, is that your Bill moves towards this and does not conflict or preclude any further responses the ACT Government might make to enshrine CRPD in legislation. It is therefore also welcomed in the reform context provided by the DRC.

We note that the legislation enshrines a Disability Advisory Council in law and this is welcomed as a sensible governance measure to value the advice or participation of disabled people.

Government appointed bodies should not replace or hold hegemony over disability lead disabled peoples organisations so we would also support the Bill including an acknowledgement of the value of independent Disabled Peoples Organisations in a way that supports the delivery of CRPD Article 29 – Participation in political and public life.

To this end our preference would be that the Bill include revised wording in section 18b as follows: to foster cooperative relationships between people with disability, their families, their carers, relevant organisations *including representative Disabled Peoples Organisations*, government and the community. The dictionary should also include a definition of DPO organisations.

We commend you on some specific areas and actions including the way you have engaged with us on the Bill and have been open to sector comments and amendments as it has progressed.

It is also significant that the Bill acknowledges ableism as a concept in law for the first time.

Combining action plans with whole-of-government strategy is a potentially powerful way to create synergy and maximise the impact of various initiatives. We hope a collaborative and multi-faceted approach will serve as a catalyst for positive change, promoting inclusivity at both systemic and individual levels.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer our insights on the revised draft Disability Inclusion Bill 2023. It's an exciting prospect, and AFI recognises its potential for positive change.

If you require further information, please contact Craig Wallace, AFI Head of Policy on

[(02) 6257 4005](https://www.google.com/search?q=advocacy+for+inclusion&rlz=1C1GCEU_en-GBAU880AU880&oq=advocac&aqs=chrome.0.35i39i355i650j46i39i175i199i650j69i57j0i67i131i433i650j0i67i650j0i131i433i512l2j0i512l3.1265j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8).



Yours sincerely,

Nicolas Lawler Craig Wallace

CEO Head of Policy

Advocacy for Inclusion Advocacy for Inclusion