



## Halting Hate, Finding Kindness – ways toward a welcoming community

# 2025 I-Day Declaration

A shared statement of values and intent following International Day of People with Disability  
2025

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### A shared statement of values and intent following International Day of People with Disability 2025

In 2025, Australia is deciding what kind of community it wants to be. Disability pride and participation have grown. Yet rising ableist hate speech and disinformation now threaten the progress we've made together.

Like other 21st century challenges, disability hate is a global problem that demands local action. It is corrosive – wearing down guardrails, fraying community bonds, eroding social licence for equality. The harm is cumulative and the consequences are real: segregation, violence, economic disempowerment, loss of services, and family breakdown.

But we can act on evidence, learning from election integrity models and communities who have faced coordinated disinformation. We can create conditions that ensure lies are not believed and not shared.

Disabled people must lead this response, but cannot do it alone. We have the facts and lived experience. The whole community has a role: to resource us, amplify our voices, and share the burden of defence.

We refuse to accept hate as the new normal. On this International Day of People with Disability, we commit to halting hate and rebooting the 2020s as a decade not of division, but of solidarity.

**Kindness is not weakness. Inclusion is not optional. To welcome is to defend.**

### CORE PRINCIPLES

**Dignity** – People with disability are experts in a shared defence. We centre disability leadership in all decisions.

**Safety** – We create environments where people with disability are protected from hate, exclusion, and harm.

**Truth** – We counter disinformation with facts and lived experience.

**Belonging** – We design for access from the start and intervene early when exclusion occurs.

**Diversity** – We recognise and value the rich diversity within and across communities.

**Equity** – We address systemic barriers to enable equal participation.

**Inclusion** – We ensure full participation as fundamental design, not an add-on.

# OUR COMMITMENTS

## Individuals: Enact Solidarity

**Call out** – Challenge harmful behaviour early. Step into the “between space” to stop harm before it escalates. Share access labour to prevent exclusion.

**Counter misinformation** – Provide facts. Amplify safer voices and displace harmful ones.

**Recognise escalation** – Build awareness of how harm grows from microaggressions to misinformation to exclusion to violence. Spot when “non-consequences” enable harmful behaviour.

**Believe lived experience** – Validate what people with disability tell you. Bear witness. Speak out on intersecting oppressions.

## Organisations: Build Social Licence and Safety

To workplaces, community organisations, service providers, and institutions:

**Set standards and embed culture** – Develop clear counter-narratives and internal safety mechanisms. Create environments where harm is prevented and victims are supported. Enable “bounce-back” from harm. Embed reflective practice and organisational responsibility.

### Act across six key domains:

1. **Disabled People’s Organisations** – Resource DPOs to support and protect community members, provide collective power, deliver training and advocacy, prevent misinformation, and work with under-resourced organisations.
2. **Business** – Make public commitments with clear success metrics. Define “what good looks like.” Take visible ethical stances. Build culture that enables safety with clear reporting lines and real consequences for harm.
3. **Workforce** – Invest in upskilling and trauma-informed training. Centre inclusion in recruitment. Respond early to harm with clear performance management. Cultivate allies and establish debriefing practices.
4. **Community** – Partner with youth groups, sports clubs, health services, cultural institutions, and unlikely allies including faith communities. Increase intersectional inclusion and ensure shared language around discrimination. Grow DPO leadership.
5. **Infrastructure** – Implement school-based responses and create safe environments. Establish clear accountability pathways with evaluation and reporting mechanisms. Provide sustained resourcing.
6. **Power** – Recognise and mobilise the authority your organisation holds. Use influence to drive broader cultural shifts and intervene when harm occurs.

**Create real consequences** – Zero-tolerance means enforcement. Train staff. Remove harmful content. Investigate threats. Support targets. Follow through.

## Systems: Foster Tangible Leadership

To governments, regulators, funders, and those with formal authority:

**Treat this seriously** – Recognise disability hate as a public health and safety threat. Resource responses proportional to the problem. Fund prevention, not just reaction.

**Lead with accountability** – Make public commitments. Mandate standards and codes of conduct. Ensure transparent accountability and capacity for legal enforcement. Measure progress and publish what you find – the good and the gaps.

**Combat harmful narratives** – Address “ridicule as entertainment” and the exposure-to-normalisation cycle. Replace pity/admiration binaries. Challenge zero-sum thinking and promote shared flourishing.

**Commission disabled leadership** – Fund Disabled People’s Organisations to develop counter-ableism codes, rapid response systems, peer support networks, and accessible toolkits. Make platforms available for disabled voices.

#### **Fill critical gaps:**

- **Preventative approaches** – Move from reaction to proactive policy. Address inconsistent implementation and gaps during transitions (school to work, justice to community).
- **Cultural connections** – Tackle ableism as connected to broader discrimination including sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and racism. Counter normalisation of violence and weak consequences.
- **Systems strengthening** – Provide consistent workforce training. Fund community connectors. Build early intervention capacity. Address service fragmentation and misaligned incentives.

**Build solidarity** – Unite responses across disability, First Nations, LGBTQIA+, and multicultural communities facing coordinated hate. Our response must be intersectional.

## **WHAT THIS MEANS**

A welcoming community listens to disabled people first. It responds fast when hate appears. It designs spaces so disabled people can actually participate. It trains people to recognise and interrupt ableism. It shares the work of access. It speaks up, even when uncomfortable.

A welcoming community mobilises energy and authority at every level – individual, organisational, and systemic – to create lasting change.

## **NEXT STEPS**

This declaration is a reboot, not an endpoint. It will guide our actions and hold us accountable until International Day of People with Disability 2026.

We acknowledge the work already underway by Disabled People’s Organisations, advocates, and allies. We commit to standing with them.

We acknowledge the hurt ableist hate has caused. We commit to preventing further harm.

We acknowledge the complexity of this work. We commit to showing up anyway – with humility, accountability, and collective responsibility.

**Together, we choose kindness. We choose accountability. We choose to defend dignity.**

*This declaration was developed through dialogue at the International Day of People with Disability 2025 event: Halting Hate, Finding Kindness – Rebooting Diversity, Disability Inclusion and Equity in the 2020s held on 3 December 2025 in Canberra. It is issued by the community co-chairs for I-Day in the ACT, Advocacy for Inclusion and Women with Disabilities ACT.*

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