

# driving up quality

in disability support  
organisations





Inclusion Melbourne is a community support organisation that has worked with people with an intellectual disability for more than 65 years.

Unlike other activity support day services, Inclusion Melbourne does not operate a centre and doesn't ask people to select activities from a list, follow a group schedule or stay in a centre. Instead, Inclusion Melbourne supports people to live a fulfilled life, to participate in community activities based on individual needs, wants and interests, and supports developing meaningful friendships within the local community. In other words, Inclusion Melbourne offers fully personalised support in the community.

Inclusion Melbourne's vision is to provide people with the opportunity to live in an inclusive community and to take their place in society as respected citizens.



Inclusion Designlab is Inclusion Melbourne's engine room for research, innovation, communications and policy.

Our vision is to bring together people with a disability, community organisations, and the world's leading disability researchers to develop cutting-edge models of practice, choice and citizenship that shatter glass ceilings and promote a more inclusive Australia.

We do this by developing, trialling, and implementing new systems of support and communicating our insights through a range of publications and media. We are also significant contributors to public policy and government inquiries.

The products and services created by Inclusion Designlab contribute to the continuous development of the disability sector through evidence based practice, accessible materials, and vital training for families and collegiate organisations.



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## meet the contributors



### professor christine bigby

**Director of the Living with Disability Research Centre at La Trobe University and Chair of Academic Board.**

Professor Christine Bigby has established herself internationally as an advocate and researcher for the social inclusion of adults with intellectual disability. She has published six books and more than 100 peer reviewed journal articles on effective policy, program and practice in disability support services. Much of her research has focused on culture and staff practice in supported accommodation services. Bigby's research has also included topics such as the history of self-advocacy, participatory research, strategies to support social participation, and the capacity of disability and mainstream services to support healthy ageing for people with lifelong disability.

Professor Bigby is highly respected in her field as a Board Member of the Australasian Society for Intellectual Disability (ASID) and past Chair of the Special Interest Group on Ageing and Intellectual Disability of the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IASSID). She is also a Fellow of IASSIDD, and life member of the Australian Association of Social Workers. Bigby's commitment to the field is highlighted by the Round Table on Intellectual Disability Policy that she convenes annually at La Trobe University.



### tim flowers

**Partner at Saward Dawson Accountants**

Tim Flowers has been a partner with Saward Dawson Accountants for eight years. He has extensive experience with all facets of enterprise management, assurance and governance and is particularly well acquainted with the pressures caused by NDIS transition. Tim has been involved with the DHS Disability Price Review project as a consultant to National Disability Services as well as acting as lead partner on numerous disability, community health, employment and training engagements. He has served as a committee member on NDS Victoria's Disability Services Transition Plan committee and a key note speaker on NDS Victoria's change challenge series.

Saward Dawson Chartered Accountants is a long established firm with extensive experience in the provision of costing, pricing, enterprise redesign, audit and related assurance services to the disability support sector. Their desire to make a difference in the community is reflected in their well-established relationships with many not-for-profit organisations such as charities, churches and other philanthropic groups. Their expertise in compliance and corporate governance has improved the efficiency of community organisations so that more funding reaches their final users.

## the NDIS and your organisation

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is an insurance scheme that offers all Australians with disability access to the support required to live fulfilling lives as equal citizens and community members. The Scheme is managed by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and funded by the Federal and State governments. People who sign up to the NDIS are known as participants and commence their engagement by developing a support plan with the assistance of a planner. Unlike Australia's previous disability funding systems, in which an often insufficient amount of funding was distributed to support organisations, the NDIS will see funds go directly to participants in order to purchase reasonable and necessary supports.

The NDIS will therefore offer people with a disability increased choice and control via self-management of their support funding and the ability to shop around for the most suitable supports. The scheme will establish a new partnership and transactional relationship between people with a disability and disability support organisations. More than ever, disability support organisations will need to function as enterprises – businesses – that exist in a free market environment and accordingly will need to offer value for money and have firm boundaries around their core business and strategic planning. This is a significant challenge for the hundreds of small to medium sized charitable organisations that form the current support system.

The NDIS website is [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au) and the My Access Checker for prospective participants can be found at:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/ndis-access-checklist>



## quality and the NDIS

Quality in disability support organisations is the discipline of identifying, implementing, measuring and reviewing the practices, processes and operational components that will lead to the best outputs and outcomes for people with a disability, create the most efficient operating environment, and maximise long-term sustainability of operations.

Organisational culture can often appear to value quality, however quality is often confused with:

- ▶ **Compliance**  
Ensuring that operations demonstrate a number of set characteristics at a given point in time.
- ▶ **Outcomes only**  
Positive results for stakeholders, even if those results are not repeatable and occur haphazardly.
- ▶ **Impressive systems**  
A well-ordered collection of policies and procedures, templates, forms and rules.

Pursuing quality requires a willingness to critically examine, in detail, the practices of the organisation and the lives of the people it supports. Adopting a quality mindset enables the honest pursuit of the following questions

### A quality mindset asks some of the following questions:

- ▶ What does it take to achieve good quality outcomes?  
How can we maintain these?
- ▶ What is our practice model? Is it consistent across the organisation?
- ▶ How do we train people?
  - › Do we use a set of considerations? A manual? A practice model? Hands on? Observation?
- ▶ How do we keep abreast of the advancements in knowledge in the sector?
- ▶ Do we have strong relationships with industry, government and academia?
- ▶ Do we communicate with our stakeholders appropriately?  
Do our stakeholders include the people we support or their families or advocates or all three?
- ▶ What is good organisational culture? What does it look like?
- ▶ Which factors work well in service delivery? Which factors in combination? How can we learn about this?
- ▶ Which variables are the most important? Which are less important? How do they interact?
- ▶ How do we embed practice frameworks such as Active Support and Positive Behaviour Support into our organisation?