



NSW Council for Intellectual Disability

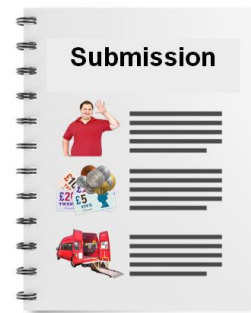
Advocacy Group submission to the

**Ageing and Disability Commission**

**NSW Disability Advocacy Review**

“Without advocacy, there would be no one to speak up about the issues. People would be stuck, I will feel like we will let people down. We would lose our voice”.

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## Introduction

Dear Ageing and Disability Commissioner  
Robert Fitzgerald AM.



We are the Advocacy Group at Council for  
Intellectual Disability (CID).



All members of the Advocacy Group have intellectual disability.

We meet every month to talk about the big issues.

We work together to make things better for people with intellectual  
disability.

We like to run campaigns to change things.

We wrote our submission together.

CID staff helped us to put the words down onto paper. All of the words in  
this submission are things we have said.

For us every day is a battle, a battle to get around, to be included and be heard.

CID has a very proud history, we have achieved a lot over the years.

We don't do advocacy work for glory, we do it to make people's lives better, because we care.

We don't like the NSW Government saying they will stop funding CID and other advocacy organisations.

It's like we always have to battle to prove ourselves and get a fair go.

We feel in our heart what we do and it is like the NSW government is taking our heart out.

Would you like to talk to us about our submission?

We have a lot to say. We would be happy to talk to you.

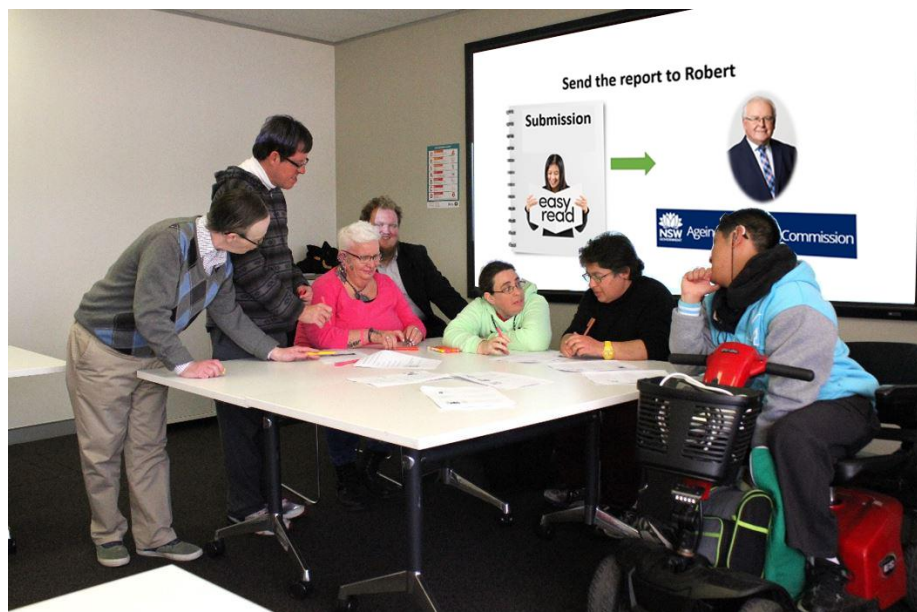
Call us on 02 9211 1611

Or email us [advocacy@nswcid.org.au](mailto:advocacy@nswcid.org.au)

Thank you for reading our submission.

**From CID Advocacy Group members.**

Tara, Judith, Fiona, Steven, Jack, Quang, Shannon, Anthony, Sarah, Kylie and Michael.



## Why advocacy is important to us

Advocacy means we people with disability can have a better life. Some people don't have people in their lives to speak up for them when things go wrong. That's why advocacy is so important.



Advocacy helps us to develop leadership in ourselves. You get the true leadership coming out. You can speak out and have a voice.

We have made many good changes for people with disability and we are worried that if CID advocacy closes down we won't get recognised, we won't get a voice anymore.

People with disability won't have a voice, they will be at risk, if there is no one helping them, it can put them at risk of being harmed.

Without advocacy, the most vulnerable people will not have the help they need when things go wrong.



Without advocacy funding, we won't be able to be part of consultations. There won't be quality consultations anymore for NSW government.

If advocacy closes the government won't make the right decisions for us. They will make rushed decisions without consultations, we won't be able to have an input into things, and the government might make big mistakes that cost a lot of money, for example like in transport. There will be no accountability.

We won't have the support we need to speak up. People might miss out on getting out into the community. Our lives won't get any better.



Advocacy organisations that support us will close without funding. We won't have anyone to turn to when things go wrong.

Without advocacy funding, we won't have a chance to represent people anymore. We will lose our platform to use our voice to get noticed. We need support all the time so we represent people. It will be very hard to build that platform again and get it back.

You will put disability rights back 20 years without disability advocacy, maybe even more than 20 years.

We won't be able to be represented on all the boards and committees we are on now if we lose the funding.

We will be left without a voice. This will be very upsetting for us. We can get left behind because it is very hard for us to speak up.





## Why CID is important to us

I did a leadership course with CID. Since I joined CID, I have met a lot of good people. If the funding is gone, then there won't be CID anymore.

I am giving a presentation at the AGM, but it might be my last. CID gives us a lot of support, I look up to CID.



When I first started coming to CID, I was very shy. Look where I am now. I can't believe how far I have come, it has been a journey. If the funding does go, we are looking back instead of looking forward.

I like to think I could do all the advocacy things I do without CID, but in reality I know I can't, with the support I get, I can do a good job.

CID encourages you and to build the confidence to do what I do.

CID has encouraged me, they have been there for me. They have seen me through the good and the bad. The staff treat us as a person, not a number.

Sometimes we have to work on very tough issues, they have given me confidence to do difficult things. Things like meet the Prime Minister or a

Minister. I would never have the confidence, support or opportunity to do that without CID.



I won the Change Making Award which I won for all the achievements I did through the CID advocacy group. I did all that work with the support of CID. I can't do those things without the on-going support of CID.



This national award is given out on the International Day of Persons with Disability by the Disability Leadership Institute.

Hearing about the funding ending has upset us a lot. It has made me cry. I now have to think about what will happen in 2020 if CID is not there.



## What we have learnt at CID

I learnt how to use my voice and speak up about issues. Now I train disability support workers on how to work with us.

CID gave me the confidence, it is hard to build up your confidence if you have been bullied and made fun of because of your disability.



I've been able to become the chairperson of CID. 15 years ago, I would have no idea, but with the support CID gave me, now I am mentoring people with intellectual disability to be the leaders for tomorrow.

Through CID I learnt skills on how to train people to work with us better. I took up an issue I had with a staff member at my service provider. CID helped me to retrain the staff. Now that worker comes to me for advice.

## Examples of good changes we have done

We have made lots of changes. Here are some of them.

We changed the government's mind about cutting the 131500 phone support for planning your trip on public transport.

We have given lots of advice to big transport things. For example, we gave lots of advice to Transport for NSW about the New Intercity Fleet and light rail.



We worked on the Hard to Swallow campaign and we won! This means that the NDIS will help people like us with health issues. This saved the NSW Government a lot of money. The Australian government said this will help 60,000 people!

We helped to make sure bus drivers get disability training.

We have spoken to so many members of parliament about really important issues.



Pictures of us meeting with MPs Mark Courage, Tanya Plibersek, Michael Daley, Emma Hurst Mark Pearson, Brad Hazzard and Prime Minister Scott Morrison

We got specialist intellectual disability health teams included in the NSW budget with the Deadly Disability Discrimination campaign.

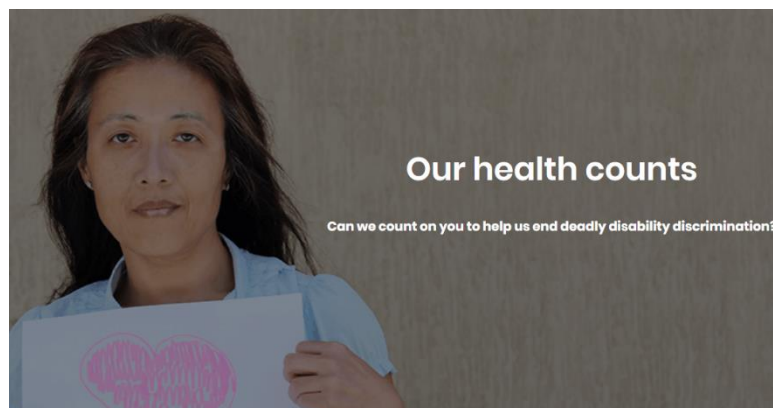




We made a submission and gave evidence to a parliamentary inquiry into the NDIS.



And we got the Australian government to commit to improving the health care of people with intellectual disability with Our Health Counts campaign.



## **A world without advocacy funding is going backwards**



Without advocacy, there would be no one to speak up about the issues. People would be stuck, I will feel like we will let people down. We would lose our voice.

We wouldn't be able to be on all the committees we are on. My voice to make a difference won't be there.

The world will go backwards for people with disability, we won't be able to make changes anymore.

I won't have a trusted organisation like CID to turn to.

## **The NSW government should fund disability advocacy**

The NSW Government want us to help them with things and be on many committees. Committees for many things like transport and health.



They should fund us if they want our advice. They are asking for our help from us, but want to cut away our funding.

It is a benefit to the government to have us. We can give them many solutions to problems.

People in regional rural areas will miss out. They have less resources as it is.

CID is independent and so many people trust us when we speak up.



At CID people with intellectual disability are the leaders. We are run by people with intellectual disability who are on the board. CID also employs people with intellectual disability.



It is important for people with intellectual disability to be our leaders. We have obstacles many wouldn't imagine. I don't want people to have to get through the battles I have.

CID has been good to improve the attitudes of people with disability in the community. Intellectual disability is often a hidden disability.

We have done a good job of changing attitudes about us. Things like getting people out of institutions.

We need more funding to do more and reach out more. So we can reach more people in group homes who get no chance to speak up.

We want to do more workshops with people but we don't have enough funding. We need more resources.



We are on a lot of committees, and we kept being asked to go on more but we can't because we don't have enough money.

We want you to tell the government about all the things we do. They are important. We want to keep doing these things but we can't without support and funding. Please speak up for us.



Thank you from the CID Advocacy Read for taking the time to read our submission.