



Social Justice STOCKTAKE



Disability Discrimination and Hardship

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Were you surprised by the results of the Stocktake regarding disability discrimination and hardship?

People with disability experience considerable discrimination and exclusion in our society so I was initially surprised. What we did find though was that general descriptions of injustice and hardship were identified more commonly than how disadvantage affected particular groups of people.

Do you think Australians believe these issues have been solved with the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)?

We did not ask for an explanation of why people identified one injustice over another so we cannot say for certain. It does seem likely that the promise of the NDIS could have led people to believe things are better than they are.

Has the problem been solved? If not, what more needs to be done?

The problem of discrimination against and exclusion of people with disability is a long way from being solved.

Often a person's impairment, the thing we think of as being the disability, is less of a barrier than society's attitude toward that impairment. Generally, a person's disability does prevent them fully participating in the community if the community makes accommodations and effort to facilitate that participation. This is why the NDIS alone is not going to address discrimination and hardship – it can only be part of a broader government and societal response that places priority on the participation of people with disability.

As a nation, we are talking more and more about including the voices of people with lived experience in public debates. How do we make the shift from 'consultation' to 'co-design' in the delivery of disability services?

The fundamental difference between consultation and co-design is who gets to make the decision. The shift is about the person who traditionally holds power (such as the board of a company or a funding body) giving up control over the final decision. That can be very difficult when the person giving up power is still accountable to shareholders or other stakeholders or bound by strict rules and laws. A number of disability services providers have already started down this journey, but we need to build trust in how co-design can take into account risk and how the outcome can deliver a better product overall.



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How does The Salvation Army help those experiencing disability discrimination and hardship?

The Salvation Army is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment in all our services and programs. The Salvation Army does not provide specialist disability services, instead we work to ensure that people with disability have equal access to the full span of our community services.