

DIA News story for IDEAS website

NSW Disability Inclusion Act (2014) commences

The 3 December 2014, International Day of People with Disability, appropriately marks the commencement of the NSW *Disability Inclusion Act (2014)*, which promotes the rights of people with disability and commits the NSW Government to making communities more inclusive and accessible for people with disability.

This significant legislation, which replaces the *Disability Services Act (1993)*, has two broad aims – one is to say how disability supports and services will be provided in NSW during the move to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The other is to make sure that even after NSW has moved to NDIS that NSW is a place where people with disability can access mainstream services and be fully included in the community.

“We’ve come a long way in the last few decades” says Disability Council member Unis Goh, “The many improvements have culminated in the new Act, which recognises that people with disability have the same rights as others.”

Unis also sees the Act as making a strong commitment to inclusion. “The legislation gives us a vision of a civilised community with inclusive neighbourhoods but also a framework for removing barriers affecting people in everyday life.”

What this will mean is better access to mainstream services and facilities and more opportunities for participation in the community. The benefits will be far-reaching.

To ensure that inclusion becomes a reality, a whole-of-government, four-year State Disability Inclusion Plan aims to improve access to mainstream services.

Consistent with this plan, NSW Government departments, local councils, and some other public authorities will develop disability inclusion action plans to provide better access to their services to people with disability. Planning must involve people with disability so that action is practical and makes a real difference.

Don’t DIS my ABILITY Ambassador Matthew Hennig looks forward to more accessible public buildings when councils develop disability inclusion action plans under the new legislation.

For Matthew, it’s the simple things (for the rest of society anyway) that count, like being able to use the front door at a restaurant or club. Matthew must often use the back door because it’s the only one that is wheelchair accessible. “It sticks my disability out there when that happens” he says. Matthew holds a Building Access Appraisal Certificate and so takes a professional as well as personal interest in accessibility.

Everyone interested is urged to get involved to make sure these plans reflect what you need to live the life you want.

For further information on the Disability Inclusion Act, including what it means for people with disability, their families and carers as well as service providers, please visit www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/dia