## Overview

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) is the national representative organisation for children and young people with disability aged 0 to 25 years. To understand the experiences and perspectives of young people with disability around decision making and inclusion, CYDA hosted a consultation in August 2021 on ‘decision making’ with six participants and another one in June 2022 on ‘inclusion’ with nine participants. These consultations were co-designed by a working group of young disabled people.

### What young people said:

Young people participating in these consultations overwhelmingly wanted to make their own decisions about both high stakes and more mundane things, but they also wanted access to support for instances where they recognised, they needed assistance. They appreciated when others intuitively understood their support needs but also wanted to be asked directly in circumstances where that was required. The barriers they faced to inclusion and decision making included overt ableism[[1]](#footnote-0) and discrimination, inherent bias and gaslighting, and outdated professional and institutional cultures, all which prevented them from accessing a range of educational, recreational, and economic activities. Participants described a range of solutions that would increase inclusion and address current barriers to decision making.

## Recommendations

### Recommendations for governments:

* The federal and state and territory governments should provide pathways for young people with disability to enter positions of leadership.
* State and territory governments should advance inclusive education by funding a scoping study into making existing schools and universities more inclusive.
* Professionalise the support worker sector through additional training and education standards to introduce a higher level of skill and professionalism to this industry.
* Further investigation of supported decision making tools.

### Recommendations for community services and organisations:

* Disability services and organisations should develop and deliver a comprehensive training program revealing the nature and types of ableism that young people with disability endure each day.

### Recommendations for industry and peak bodies:

* Generate a media strategy and guidelines for promoting messages about disability and ableism more broadly.
* Create a campaign to introduce inclusion more widely into workplaces so that young people have more opportunities in the workforce.
* Create up to date evaluation and best practice guides to workplace inclusion.

1. ‘Ableism’ describes the process of negatively stereotyping individuals or groups on the basis of a perceived ‘difference’/ disability and, often, discriminating based on such stereotypes at individual and systemic levels [↑](#footnote-ref-0)