

“Pursuing Ordinary Lives Through Valued Roles”

The project aims to increase the capacity of people with disability and families in NSW to self-advocate and influence change by:

- Participating, co-presenting, speaking, storytelling, and team leading in learning and training events held in different parts of NSW aimed at increasing social, community and economic participation, choice and control and protection of rights
- Providing opportunities and support for public speaking
- Increasing opportunities to influence mainstream and disability service providers and, as a result, to have greater access to mainstream and community services
- Gaining more knowledge about valued roles, full participation, expectations, vision of full belonging and contributing to the wider community
- Providing disability service providers and community organisations with strategies to increase the social and economic participation of people with disability
- Participating in, and leading, local networks to continue influencing change once the project has been completed
- Taking on leadership roles in like-minded groups and Foundations Forum itself

The project will offer strategies, tools and the confidence to be able to address the social barriers to attaining positive social roles in community.

People with disability have often been negatively affected by their direct experience of low expectations either from the time they were born, early in their life, or from the time their disability was acquired or discovered. As a result, many have started early on the path of a “separate life” away from the mainstream life of the wider community which, in turn, has served to reinforce negative societal attitudes and expectations.

People who have attended our workshops in the past have often said it has been these low expectations that have created societal barriers to an ordinary life as well as reducing their motivation and confidence to be able to fulfil a meaningful life and be seen and included as a contributing member of society.

Feedback received from Foundations Forum involvement to date demonstrates that, when people with disability are in valued roles, whether it be an employment role, community role, family role or a civic role, they are far more likely to be able to lead an ordinary life, achieve a sense of belonging in their community, influence change themselves and be seen as pioneers and leaders in changing the expectations and attitudes of the broader community.

The increased reach and involvement of people with disability and/or families will be achieved by:

- Recruitment of a Project Coordinator to work with people with disability and their families to develop and carry out the activities set out in the Activity Plan. The Project Co-ordinator will report to a sub-committee made up of a majority of people

- with disability and/or families and will be recruited on the basis of their commitment to work in partnership with people with disability and/or families
- A targeted work plan that increases the number of learning events and networking gatherings across NSW which focus on fostering and creating strategies to enhance the social, economic and community participation of people with disability and the protection of their rights
 - Develop a networking and communication plan using social media and web-based tools to assist
 - Conduct immersive in-house training with interested services and allied organisations that support people with disability, to identify and address the barriers for people with disability in accessing mainstream services and having more opportunities for ordinary life via having more valued roles
 - Develop a leadership program so people with disability and their families are able to share their stories in a wide range of settings and platforms and have a positive influence on others to make change to their lives and an increased confidence and benefit to their own lives.
 - Develop resources through supporting people with disability and/or family members to author and create their own ideas about how to inform others about their achievement of ordinary lives through valued roles.
 - Scoping and preparation for sustainability after the project has been completed through supporting localised networks where people with disability and/or families will continue to influence change, increase their roles and improve access to mainstream services
 - Ongoing evaluation and review of the activities undertaken as part of the project and ensuring people with disability and their families are part of the process

This three-year project has been funded by the Commonwealth Government through the *Information Linkage and Capacity Building Grants* (Individual Capacity Building Program grant round) More information about ILC can be found here:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/community/information-linkages-and-capacity-building-ilc>