## **A group of people crossing a busy street in a city. The title of the report is Attitudes Matter: Findings from a national survey of community attitudes toward people with disability in Australia Logos of the Universities involved with the CRE-DH including University of Melbourne Sydney, UNSW Canberra, RMIT and Monash University**

## **Logos representing the universities involved in the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health. They are University of Melbourne, Sydney, UNSW Canberra, Monash and RMIT.**

## Research Report

## **Attitudes Matter – Findings from a national survey of attitudes towards people with disability in Australia.**

### **Easy Read version**

### Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health

### August 2021

## **How to use this report**

The Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health (CRE-DH):

* did some research
* wrote a report about what we found

The report is called *Attitudes Matter: findings from a national survey of community attitudes towards people with disability in Australia.*

You can find the full report on [our website](https://credh.org.au/projects/community-attitudes-towards-people-with-disability/)**.**

We have written some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.

We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 14.

This is a **summary** of the full report.

A summary only includes the most important ideas.

Researchers from the University of Melbourne wrote this report.

When you see the word ‘we’, it means the researchers.

In this report, we talk about things that might upset some people.

You can ask for help to read this report. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

## **What is in this report? Page Number**

[What is this report about? 5](#_Toc54599651)

[What did we learn from our research? 7](#_Toc54599652)

[What we can do to make things better](#_Toc54599652) 12

[Word list 1](#_Toc54599655)4

[Contact us 1](#_Toc54599657)7

## **What is this report about?**

This report is about our research.

Our research looks at **attitudes** toward people with disability in Australia.

**Attitudes** are what people:

* Think
* Feel
* Believe

**Attitudes** can affect

* What you do
* How you live your life

**Attitudes** can affect how people with disability are treated by:

* People
* Organisations
* Government

**Attitudes** can stop people with disability from being **included**.

This means that people with disability do not feel:

* accepted
* like they belong.

In 2018, we did a **survey** called *Community Attitudes towards People with Disability in Australia.*

A **survey** helps us to work out:

* What people are thinking
* What needs to change.

The **survey** asked:

* what people think about people with disability
* how people behave towards people with disability
* what they think other people think about people with disability

People with disability helped write the **survey**.

2000 people did the **survey**.

**Attitudes** have an important role in including people with disability.

When people with disability are **included**, everyone can take part.

We want to understand what people think about people with disability.

This is so they can be better **included** in everyday life.

**What did we learn from our research?**

This is a **summary** of what we found.

A **summary** includes the most important ideas.

The survey told us that most people in Australia have good **attitudes** towards people with disability. An example of a good **attitude** is that people with disability are very **capable**.

**Capable** is when you can do things well.

The **survey** told us that some people in Australia have bad **attitudes** towards disability in Australia. An example of a bad **attitude** is that people with disability are not expected to do very well.

**Common beliefs**

The survey tells us about some **common beliefs** people have about disability.

A **common belief** is when many people think or believe the same thing.  
In the survey, some common beliefs are that people with disability:

* are not expected to do very well
* are easy to take advantage of
* have less to look forward to
* are a **burden** on their family or on the community

**Burden** means something difficult that you must deal with or worry about.

Another common belief is thatmany people feel **inspired** by people with disability.

**Inspired** means they look up to them.

**Making decisions**

The survey told us that some people believe that people with disability do not have the right to:

* make their own decisions
* have choice and control in their own lives.

This attitude can be a **barrier**. A **barrier** is something that stops you from doing something you:

* need to do
* want to do

Many people with disability experience **barriers** in their life such as:

* where they live and who they live with
* who they have relationships with
* their health
* their education
* **their job.**

Some people told us that they believe that people with disability should not:

* talk about sex
* have children.

This attitude is called **paternalism**.

**Paternalism** is when you think someone:

* needs to be protected
* can’t look after themselves.

**Paternalism** can also mean you treat someone like a child.

Many people told us that people with disability should get to decide:

* where they live
* who they live with
* who they have close relationships with.

**Behaviour towards people with disability**

Some people told us they are unsure how to act around people with disability.

Some people in the survey told us other people can be:

* impatient with people with disability
* make fun of people with disability
* ignore people with disability
* treat people with disability as if they have no feelings.

These attitudes and behaviours can lead to **discrimination. Discrimination** is when you treat someone badly because they are different.

Many people with disability face **discrimination**. Sometimes they face **discrimination** because of:

* their disability
* other things they cannot change.

The survey asked about **inclusion**.

**Inclusion** means everyone feels part of a group or part of the community. Everyone wants to feel included.

The survey asked about whether people think people with disability feel included:

* At work
* At school
* In friendships
* In the community

The survey told us that many people believe that:

* schools are not accepting of children with disability
* workplaces are not accepting of people with disability

Many people also told us that they think it is hard for people with disability:

* to make friends
* take part in the community

However, most people want to include people with disability.

An **inclusive** community:

* has supports and services for everyone to use
* lets everyone take part as equals
* lets people with disability take part in making decisions about the community.

In an **inclusive** community, people with disability:

* are respected
* get an equal chance to take part
* feel important
* can build good relationships and make friends
* get the support they need in the community.

**What can we do to make things better?**

The survey told us that most people in Australia have good attitudes towards people with disability.

There are also some people with bad attitudes towards people with disability.

It is important to change attitudes that make people with disability feel invisible, left out or isolated and alone.

We know that these attitudes can sometimes lead to violence and abuse.

People with disability have the right to live free from these things.

That is why we have a **Royal Commission** into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of people with disability.

A **royal commission** is how the government looks into a big problem. It helps us find out what:

* went wrong
* we can fix.

The Royal Commission is looking at ideas for making things better for people with disability including how to change bad attitudes.

Australia is trying to become more inclusive:

* In 2008, the Australian Government agreed to follow the **UN Convention.**

The **UN Convention** sets out the rights of people with disability.

It explains how people with disability should be treated.

We know that attitudes are very important in:

* Education
* Employment
* Justice system
* Health and wellbeing.

The survey tells us that government, organisations and companies must change their attitudes towards people with disability.

This means they must support the right of people with disability to be:

* **independent**
* fully included in our community.

When you are **independent**, you are in control of your own life and choices.

That means we must:

* do more to change attitudes to disability
* remove barriers for people with disability
* take action when people discriminate against people with disability
* think about inclusion and equality when creating **policies** and **laws**
* give people with disability a chance to be involved in the creation of new laws and policies.

## **Word list**

**This list explains what the bold words in this** paper mean.

**Attitudes**

Attitudes are what people think, feel and believe.

**Barrier**

A barrier is something that stops you from doing something you need or want to do.

**Burden**

**Burden** is something difficult that you have to deal with or worry about.

**Capable**

Capable is when you can do things well.

**Common belief**

A common belief is when many people think or believe the same thing.

**Discrimination**

Discrimination is when someone is treated badly because of something about them they cannot change.

**Employment**

Employment means you have a job, go to work, get paid.

**Inclusion**

Inclusion means everyone is included and can take part in our community.

**Inclusive**

When something is inclusive, everyone can take part.

**Independent**

When you are independent, you are in control of your own life and choices.

**Inspired**

Inspired means people look up to someone or something.

**Justice system**

The criminal justice system deals with criminal offences. This is also called breaking the law.

**Laws**

Laws are rules about what you should and shouldn’t do.

**Paternalism**

Paternalism can mean you treat someone like a child, or when you think someone can’t look after themselves.

**Policies**

Policies are government plans for how to do things.

**Respect**

**Respect is when people are treated equally.**

**Rights**

Rights are rules about how everybody should be treated fairly.

**Royal Commission**

A royal commission is how the government looks into a big problem. It helps us find out what went wrong and what we can fix.

**Summary**

A summary includes the most important ideas.

**Survey**

Asurveyhelps us to work out what people are thinking and what needs to change.

**UN Convention**

The UN Convention sets out the rights of people with disability. It explains how people with disability should be treated.

**Violence**

Violence is when someone hurts you physically.

**Workplaces**

Workplaces are any place you work, such as:

* an office
* a factory
* a shop.

**Contact us**

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