



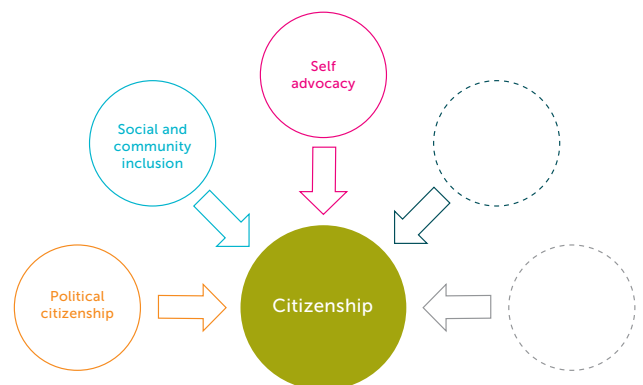
In 2014 and 2015, *Inclusion Melbourne* partnered with the *Human Rights Law Centre (Melbourne)* and the *Melbourne Law School (University of Melbourne)* to develop a legal brief to challenge discriminatory legislation that currently prevents people with cognitive impairment from voting.

In early 2016, Inclusion Designlab researchers travelled to sites of best practice for electoral inclusion for voters with intellectual disability in Canada, the UK and Sweden.

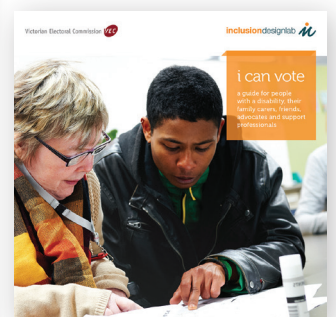
In 2016 and 2017, Inclusion Designlab produced:

- ▶ A report for the VEC to outline strategies for supporting electoral inclusion for voters with intellectual disability
- ▶ An academic commentary article in the RAPIDD peer-reviewed journal summarising this work
- ▶ A co-developed survey with La Trobe University that will result in the most robust study of voting patterns of people with intellectual disability ever conducted in Australia.
- ▶ A dual-read guide to assist family members, friends, advocates or supporters to guide a person with intellectual disability through the journey to political awareness.

2018 will see the culmination of much of this work with the trialling of an electoral inclusion campaign in the lead-up to the 2018 Victorian state election.



Victorian Electoral Commission 



I can vote: an electoral inclusion campaign

Inclusion Melbourne supports people with intellectual disabilities to experience social inclusion and belonging in their local communities, with meaningful employment in regular workplaces, education and training.

- ▶ This approach to inclusive supports means that sex, **politics** and religion are domains of life to which they have full access if desired. However, people with intellectual disability have traditionally been shielded from genuine self-driven engagement with these domains.
- ▶ At Inclusion Melbourne support coordinators work in a personalised community – based model of support provision and therefore assisting people to enrol and prepare for elections sits alongside preparing for going to the dentist, a concert or a VET course.
- ▶ However, in Australia few voters with intellectual disability have a **supported pathway** that will guide them through the enrolment, preference determination, transport and voting processes.
- ▶ Access to voting is not only about logistics but is also about ensuring that people with intellectual disability are allowed to make political decisions and to be involved in the political conversations millions of Australians have every day.

Inclusion Designlab's inspiration for the *I Can Vote* campaign hails from other high quality electoral inclusion campaigns in countries such as Sweden, United Kingdom and Canada.

- ▶ **Disability Matters 2016** was a Canadian campaign that saw political candidates submit their Easy English election materials in video format to the campaign website.
- ▶ Electoral inclusion campaigns such as these acknowledge that the journey to political citizenship for people with intellectual disabilities begins with awareness of choice and rights, including the right to experience a broader range of options.
- ▶ They reflect the principles of supported decision-making and legal capacity embedded in legislation such as the *Victorian Disability Act (2006)*, and the UNCRPD.

The *I Can Vote* website campaign initiative aims to improve the political awareness and electoral inclusion of people with intellectual disability and to overcome some of the key barriers to electoral inclusion in Victoria and Australia.



I can vote: breaking down the barriers

As many as half a million Australians with intellectual disabilities experience significant barriers to electoral participation simply because of the societal assumption that people with a disability are inherently disqualified from political activities due to limitations in capacity.

However, electoral law in all States allows discretion to potentially preclude individuals characterised as having intellectual disabilities from voting. These provisions leave Australians with intellectual disabilities vulnerable to having their right to vote challenged.

Legislative reform is only part of the journey to increasing electoral participation. Electoral Inclusion will improve as steps are taken to transform practice, educate the community and actively promote a culture of political citizenship in the lives of people with intellectual disability via electoral inclusion campaigns such as *I Can Vote*.

about inclusion designlab

The Inclusion Designlab brand was launched in 2014 to spearhead Inclusion Melbourne's research, innovation, communications and policy. Our vision is to bring together people with a disability, community organisations, and the world's leading disability researchers to develop cutting-edge models of practice, choice and citizenship that shatter glass ceilings and promote a more inclusive Australia.

Inclusion Designlab is currently working across diverse domains of research and practice, including evidence based practice models such as Person Centred Active Support and Support for Decision Making, as well as LGBTIQ inclusion, electoral inclusion and NDIS family readiness.



Academic and peak body partners now include *Deakin University, University of Melbourne, La Trobe University, Monash Health,*

National Disability Services (NDS), Centre for Developmental Disability Health Victoria, the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC), GLHV (Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria), the National Disability Insurance Scheme ILC Program, and the Australian Dental Association.

Our program partners include *VALID, Carrington Health, Transgender Victoria, Victoria Legal Aid, Migrant Resource Centre North West, BGKLLN, the MetroAccess officers of Brimbank and Melton, Bayside City Council and Bayley House.*

Inclusion Designlab also has relationships with *RMIT University, University of Sydney, Southern Cross University, University of British Columbia (Canada), University of Kent (UK), Cambridge (UK), Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan (Swe), and United Response (UK).*



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