



# FAIRGROUND CONFERENCE 2025

*“making change inclusively”*

sa4i presentation







# WHO ARE WE?

- ? student led advocacy group
- ? we advocate to see the full and meaningful inclusion of young people with disability, and all people in all aspects of their lives (with a focus on education)
- ? we create submissions to Government and run events to facilitate community change





# WHAT IS OUR ADVOCACY WORK BASED AROUND?



based in human rights framework



advocate for meaningful inclusion



where do we advocate for this?

- political life
- public life
- advocacy spaces
- decision making



Article 29 of the CRPD says this!

## Article 29

### Participation in political and public life

States Parties shall guarantee to persons with disabilities political rights and the opportunity to enjoy them on an equal basis with others, and shall undertake:

(a) To ensure that persons with disabilities can effectively and fully participate in political and public life on an equal basis with others, directly or through freely chosen representatives, including the right and opportunity for persons with disabilities to vote and be elected, inter alia, by:

## OUR CORE PRINCIPLE

# INCLUSION IS FOR EVERYONE

**but why is inclusion for all?**

- **inclusion is for everybody**, meaningfully opening up advocacy and youth discussions to students with disability benefits all students.
- the voices and perspectives of disabled young people enrich all discussions and decisions, and making spaces inclusive of disabled students **make them more universally inclusive of everyone**, benefitting other groups too.



# STUDENT ALLIANCE!



## THE IMPORTANCE OF ALLYSHIP

While it is absolutely **essential** that **people with disability** are **involved and consulted in decision making**, that does not mean the burden of systematic change should be on them. **Allies have a key role** in ensuring that change is a **community effort**.



# MOVING AWAY FROM ONLY VALUING ‘FORMAL’ ADVOCACY

## OTHER FORMS

- ✗ there needs to be increased recognition that advocacy doesn't just occur in formalised settings (e.g. boards, committees), which often pose structural barriers to the participation of students with disability.
- ✓ peer circles
- ✓ community events
- ✓ non-formal feedback forums
- ✓ ‘conversation cafes’



# LIVED EXPERIENCE

people involved in advocacy  
should be educated on disability



disabled advocates should have  
opportunities to be educating  
with their lived experience

## LIVED EXPERIENCE?

“Trust us, we’re the experts on our own disabilities [...] Just asking kids what they need, and listening, and actually recognising that what they say matters. [...] Nothing about us, without us. It is fundamental to any reform to make the community it affects feel listened to.”

- **student, age 16**



# DEBUNKING MYTHS ABOUT INCLUSIVE ADVOCACY



1. some people are “too disabled”
2. it’s too hard
3. ineffective use of resources/funding

**inclusion is a right, not a privilege!**



A photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a student with long dark hair, wearing a grey sweater, has their right arm raised high. In the background, another student is seated at a desk, looking down at a book or paper. The classroom has a whiteboard and a blue wall.

# INCLUSION SHOULD ECHO THROUGH ADVOCACY

## ➤ WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

We think it's super important that inclusion is present in all parts of daily activism, from having screen-reader friendly and easy read documents, to having accessible feedback processes.

# BENEFITS OF INCLUSION



authentic valuing of disabled advocacy sets the precedent that all voices are valued, which is a belief that young people will take into the world



increased opportunity to be a valued member of society



breaks stereotypes



educates involved parties



normalises disabled inclusion



