



November 21st 2014

Dear

The Reinforce Committee would like to thank and congratulate the Victorian government on their exceptional attention to supporting Social Inclusion within the NDIS transition.

In particular Reinforce members are very happy with the Victorian Government giving strong recommendation to the continuation of self-advocacy groups and their subsequent funding.

We sincerely hope that you remain committed to expanding self-advocacy programs.

Reinforce commends the recognition that the Victorian government conferred to self-advocacy in the recent NDIS transition report (Inquiry into Social Inclusion and Victorians with a Disability). Reinforce hopes that both sides of Government will join together in their recognition of the value of self-advocacy to strengthen communities where different and highly significant issues arise from these varied 'lived experience' groups.

Reinforce has been a part of and initiated many self-advocacy projects which support people with an intellectual disability and promote their human rights, since its inception in 1981.

The following are just three examples of many projects:

Reinforce has developed a DVD and training called '*My House My Home My Rights*' for staff of Group Homes in Victoria. This education tool is an asset to

assist with creative ideas for decision making within Group Homes, while respecting the dignity & needs of residents.

The Reinforce History Group started in 2006. It was a partnership between Reinforce, Latrobe University and RMIT. Since it started we have been having fortnightly meetings. In 2008 we organized a reunion at Story Hall, the reunion was a big success. The group interviewed 25 people on what they can remember about their time at Reinforce in the 80's. The History Group has been to conferences such as; disability inclusive research collaboration conference Sydney, Assid Adelaide and Having a Say conference and also New Zealand.

Powerful Parents Self Advocacy Group has members who are parents with an intellectual disability and believe that most parents should be supported to have their children at home with them. This group works to offer support by sharing peer experiences, preventing isolation and has a self- advocacy role aimed at providing fairer systems for parents with a disability.

Reinforce agrees with the Victorian Governments report findings that:

"It was considered that self-advocacy was a crucial avenue to empowering people with disability to be more active participants in their own life and more active citizens in the community"

We hope that the government continues to fund Reinforce and self-advocacy groups alike.

Reinforce welcomes further discussions and is happy to provide more information to you.

Yours Sincerely,

Susan Arthur

President

Reinforce Inc.

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