

2nd Australian Universal Design Conference
Transcript of the Panel Session: The Economics of Inclusion
Minor edits by Jane Bringolf

Panel Members were Ms Ro Coroneos, Lendlease; Ms Sally Coddington, Curb Cut Effect, The Hon Kelly Vincent MLC, South Australia, and Mr Paul Nunnari, Department of Premier and Cabinet (NSW).

MS RO CORONEOS:

I want to say upfront that we are not perfect at this, we still have work to do in this space, but being responsible for the social strategy at Barangaroo South, one of the claims we make about that development is that it is world-leading, that it is world class and it's certainly superlative in terms of its sustainability features. When I look at it from a social sustainability perspective the question did arise, "how are we demonstrating inclusiveness?" and in reality there wasn't a very strong response, there was a compliance response of course, but it prompted me to really think about what is the experience of people coming to a place that will eventually have 23,000 people working there, about 1.8 million visitors a year, what are we actually going to do to create a sense of dignified and equitable access at Barangaroo South.

So the starting point was an internal inquiry and we did this in partnership with the Australian Network on Disability, who were fantastic as collaborators, and that exercise was really interesting. So we engaged with development managers - these are the people that develop and negotiate leasing deals for the site, project managers and designers and it was evident that people's lived experience was often quite removed from - there wasn't that personal contextualisation of thinking about how you design a space for somebody who might have a condition, be it visual or a mobility.

If you think about almost 20% of the Australian population has a condition of some sort with an ageing population on top of it, the ability to design, to think more thoughtfully about designing places that people feel included is an area that's in a lot of respects, a bit of a no-brainer, but it was evidence there was work to be done to build that awareness internally. In those consultation sessions there were a lot of ah-ha moments by people, particularly with designers who said "My goodness, of course, you would need to look at this early on in the design stage". The traditional property view is that you kind of do a bit of a tick and flick, and I don't mean that in a facetious way, but you send it off to an expert consultant who will vet the Australian Standard compliance requirements and job done. Then for those older buildings there's often the capital expenditure headache of having to retrofit. So there is this - it's not uncommon to have that kind of response of well, it's going to cost a lot more money and why would I do it because it's not going to be affecting a lot of the population anyway. So there is that implied attitude there.

So in setting out to develop guidelines, we were extremely fortunate to have the Westpac group, who moved to the middle tower at Barangaroo South and they had been on their own journey as well in building in inclusive design features in their commercial office fit-out, and we were able to showcase that. So I have to acknowledge Westpac for their collaboration in this as well and I think if you go to the AND website and look up design for

dignity guidelines you'll see examples there and very much principles-based sort of guidance around things to think about when you are designing inclusive spaces.

So we were able to showcase Westpac's fit-out and that takes away that very technical language that's used around how you create the appropriate spaces. It was about showing visually and using more approachable language around what's possible. Actually if you do it early on and you take that principles-based approach, and are a bit more thoughtful and mindful about the spectrum of conditions, not often complementary, sometimes in conflict, but to demonstrate that thoughtfulness, it really then resonates with people. Designers in particular are able to get that immediate appreciation of what's possible.

If you do it early enough, it doesn't really have to cost all that much more because you build it in as any other design requirement in a design briefing stage, and that was the big take-out.

So now it has provoked a big conversation in our organisation. It means how do we use this companion to other standards and guidances when we design spaces? How do we have a top of mind discipline to make sure that when we are designing places that we are being more thoughtful about the small details? It's often the small touches, the type of door handle you use, the way you configure security barriers in a foyer, having counters that are not too high, and having those consciously built into the design phase.

Now economically why is that good for business? It's pretty obvious. Why would I go to a place where I don't have the level of amenity and I don't have the feeling of comfort and wellbeing and if I'm not going by myself, I'm going with an entourage, then of course we're all going to stay longer, we're going to spend more money and we're going to come back again. So if we talk about it from a retail perspective, you know, going to shops, to food court areas, higher foot traffic is good for business, it's good for your rental yields and it's good for your tenancy. So it makes sense that if I'm providing those amenities, then I know that people will have the confidence to come back again and patronise those spaces again.

So there isn't anything particularly complex about that from a business perspective. I think it's just about being mindful in that early phase around thinking through who your end users are going to be, and it's not your own bias that should dictate that. It really needs to be a bit broader than that and a bit more mindful of the demographic that is changing already.

MS SALLY CODDINGTON:

So what happens when a person with over 20 years of marketing and business development experience has a child with quadriplegia? It sounds like the start of a joke, doesn't it, but it's not actually a joke. That's me and what you get is someone who's fascinated with the business of inclusion.

So it's not just because our family needs restaurants that don't have steps and that have plenty of room to manoeuvre a wheelchair, it's not just because we appreciate adequate toileting facilities for Nicky so we can spend a complete day out together, it's not even because we love to travel as a family, especially overseas, and we'd actually pay a

premium for accessible transport and accommodation. It's actually because I can't understand why most businesses still fail to appreciate the massive untapped opportunity in creating products, services, spaces and experiences that are accessible not only to people with a disability but also older people, large people, small people, people with strollers or luggage, accessible to everybody.

Accessible to all of these people and their friends and families, because one-third of families have a family member with a disability and 70% of people with a disability socialise with friends and family at least once a week. 40% eat at restaurants at least once a week and 23% go to department stores or shopping centres at least once a week, and they do it with friends and family. People are increasingly making choices about where they spend their money based on how easy it is to access and how welcome they feel.

People who identify as having a disability constitute a market similar in size to China at approximately 1.27 billion people worldwide. Their friends and family add another 2.2 billion people and together they control over \$8 trillion US in annual disposable income.

Let me put that in context with you. Marketers fall all over themselves to reach the teenager market, so that's people aged 13 to 19. You see it everywhere from clothing and footwear to technology. But globally teens have about \$820 billion in spending power, so that's about 10% of that of people with disabilities and their families. So I'm talking here about people who identify as having a disability. That's about 1 in 5 people or 20% of people. But in most cases that's not older people with an impairment, even though it's the kind of impairment that could really benefit from self-opening doors or large font menus or less obtrusive music.

So let's add older people as consumers to the untapped opportunity continued to be ignored. Baby boomers are one of the fastest growing demographics. In Australia there are over 4.7 million baby boomers and the proportion of people over 65 is expected to more than double in the next few decades. But they hold more than 40% of Australia's wealth.

So having said that, there are some great examples of businesses that do inclusion of people with disabilities and other areas of diversity well, and I'm just going to show you three of my favourites. So let's start with supermarket trolleys (shows photograph). You may have seen these trolleys in the leading supermarkets. It's a trolley for parents with a child with a disability and the trolley allows for a child of up to 70 kilograms. It has padded sides and a harness and additional support and you may or may not also know that some supermarkets have introduced a quiet hour at the beginning of trading so that families can actually come with their children or their family members that have sensory challenges.

We're all familiar with the high shallow convenience trolley that reduces the need to bend and stretch. It's easy to steer, creating a smooth and stable trip around the store, particularly good for older customers. Trolleys with specially designed handles that give a choice on how you prefer to hold and push the trolley. So supermarket trolleys are a great example of variety and choice for different customers and their needs.

So you may or may not have seen a recent TV campaign, the NBT TV campaign, that's titled silent reunion. This ad shows two deaf friends who've lost contact and are reunited. They appear in the same room sharing stories, communicating in sign language. Subtitles

bring viewers into the conversation, but it transpires that they aren't together at all but talking over video call thanks to high-quality broadband connection. So NBN worked with Deaf Services Queensland to demonstrate how fast broadband can empower, enable and help remove some of the communication barriers Australians with disability face. The campaign highlights how fast broadband is helping bridge the digital divide, enabling all Australians, not just those who are deaf, to have closer and more meaningful connections with their loved ones no matter where they are.

Here is another ad which is one of my favourites. Wimpy Burger is a fast food chain out of South Africa and they did a social media campaign where they used sesame seeds to write on top of the burger buns to describe what was in the burger in Braille. They did video vignettes of people who were blind reading the burgers and it was just really fun. But it was a social media campaign to promote the fact that they were making Braille menus available in their stores. But what was really interesting about it was the extent of viral impact that the campaign had globally and outside the disability community as well, and it really showed that the economic impact of inclusion in enhancing your image, but also in creating viral opportunities to talk about your business as well.

THE HON. KELLY VINCENT:

As law maker, as a member of parliament, I'm often asked to justify the economic cost of inclusion, in this case universal design, what does it cost us to include these people over there, what are these people going to cost us? What is more interesting and important to me and I think should be more interesting and important to all of us is what it costs us to exclude these people. When I say "these people", I'm using that obviously as an umbrella term, it's rude, but it serves as a short form. But what does it cost us to exclude people who have any variety of access needs. I wanted to share a few examples of my constituent case file in my office, not in any great detail and would never do that without permission, but I want you to imagine these examples.

In the area of education, I know of an 8-year-old boy with autism who has what are labelled very challenging behaviours. As a result, he has been essentially excluded from the education system. So what happens to him now? What happens to his literacy level, to his chances for independence, to his life opportunities, his chances for employment, his chances for life skills, to be able to do his own shopping, all of those things that many of us can take for granted we learn from school? What happens if he misses out for one month, what happens if he misses out for one year, what happens if he never returns to the education system? What will that cost us in terms of the extra supports that he might need as a result of that far into his future? And of course my work also shows me that unfortunately many people who are excluded from the education system either part time or permanently often have a higher rate of interaction with the justice system because there is nobody there to help them learn more positive behaviours, more autonomy in their behaviours, more skills for self-regulation and that kind of thing, which leads them to continue exhibiting or using those same behaviours as coping mechanisms in our life, which can lead to some interaction with the criminal justice system due to what is labelled inappropriate behaviour in adulthood. So that's one thought to leave with you.

On the issue of housing, I know of a 30-year-old woman with a physical disability and some other complications to her health who stayed in hospital an extra year. So a year after being medically fit for discharge she remained in hospital basically because of the way that

government departments operate in silos. So rather than the disability services department come and install the grab rails or provide that extra support work she needed to return to her family home, it's easier for them, it doesn't affect their KPIs, if that person remains in the hospital department responsibility, where of course the hospital department pays for the hospital service.

The hospital bill for that extra time was estimated to be somewhere around \$450,000. I don't need to tell you that that could have built her a house from the ground up. So what does it cost us to not allow that person's independence? And also what is the cost to their mental health and potentially being excluded from family and friend life, and employment, by having to remain in hospital? I'm sure we would all agree that they are not the best places to be for your mental health or even sometimes for your physical health. What does it cost not only to that person in her personal life, but to us as a society, as an economy?

In the area of justice, what is the cost when an alleged victim, alleged offender or witness can't use our justice system because no communication aid or alternative supports are put in place? For example, I'm aware of a case that occurred in recent years in South Australia that became known as the Christies Beach Case or Bus Mums Case. This was the case of 7 young people with varying levels of intellectual disability who were allegedly sexually abused by their school bus driver, but their case never stood up in court because of their level of disability. At that time the disability justice plan was not underway and so there were no supports for them to communicate their evidence in court. As a result the case fell over in court.

Now, of course can I say with absolute certainty that we would have reached a conviction had those supports been in place? Of course I can't, but not having their day in court really had an impact on those families. And then there is the difficulty in fighting for support services because they haven't necessarily been proven to be victims. They've had to fight for a lot of supports that they have now received, but certainly should not have to have fought as hard as they did.

For those young people that were allegedly abused, the impact on their behaviours, everything from not being able to tolerate physical touch to not being able to shower more frequently than once a week, to perhaps even mimicking some of the behaviours that they allegedly witnessed from the alleged abuser. So the impact, that neglect, is far reaching.

The underlying question is what is the cost of NOT implementing access for all?

MR PAUL NUNNARI:

Before I begin, I need to show this video because it's absolutely awesome. It's the UK promotional video for the Paralympic Games – "Yes I Can" We are the Superheroes".

So let's relate that to accessible events and the economics of inclusion. Paralympic Games start in Rio on the 7th. Can you imagine if the only accessible area at the Paralympics were just the venues? What a waste, what an absolute waste in regards to other business segments reliant on those Games to make money from that crowd. I trained very hard to get to three Paras, I'll give you a quick example when I was in Athens – not the most accessible place in the world. The Acropolis is on a big hill and there was no wheelchair

access whatsoever. The word through the grapevine was that someone was keen to get wheelchair users and para athletes there as well. At the bottom of the hill were a series of market stalls. They made an awesome lift. Dirt was falling off the side of the rock, but it was pretty safe for the most part. But what was fundamental to the lift was the businesses below in the Acropolis precinct making money from every Paralympic athlete. It was really interesting to see a lot of the stores had at least one step to get into them and they'd made - again not pretty - purpose-built ramps where you could at least get in. The stores that you couldn't get in, the owners were standing outside waiting for you, inviting you to ask what you might want in regards to purchasing something. So I thought it's a really good example of how something like the Paralympics can really change the perception - it's not about disability or inclusion, it's about making money.

Another good example came out of London in 2012 where there's an area in the West End of London that's all cobblestones and they knew that they'd get a lot of pedestrian traffic from Paralympians, their family and friends and supporters. But they knew cobblestones were a barrier for getting around. So they pulled up all the cobbles and then re-laid them flat so the wheeling surface was quite easy to get around. They did that for the pure purpose of people being able to access businesses equitably, with dignity, in that area. So two really good examples of how the economics of accessibility have worked really well. But they've worked really well in the context of the Paralympics, and the Paralympics embodies everything about accessibility inclusion, changing attitudes and so forth.

What I want to focus on is what we're doing within Australia, and the shift from not always making the case around the economics of access, but getting some really good facts and figures out there. I think a lot of people in the community think people with disability have no money and are pretty poor and when you go down to the UN list of OECD - the OECD list, Australia rates 27th out of 27 in regards to people with disability living below the poverty line. So I think that's something that we need to look at and if that's a fact, we need to state it as a fact and obviously try to change it. But if it's not a fact, we need to state it as a fact also and change those attitudes out there.

I have the great privilege of working with a lot of massive events within Sydney, New Year's Eve, Australia Day, Mardi Gras. But one event that particularly draws a lot of attention in regards to visitation is Vivid Sydney. Vivid this year ran for 24 nights and brought in 2.8 million visitors and Vivid Sydney isn't about just showing lights in the middle of winter. The whole purpose of Vivid is that during that time of year it's a down time and businesses wanted more people spending money and staying in this city during that time of year. They focus on overnight stays and the visitor spend, and I can tell you that accessibility is a very high priority.

I want to talk about reputational risk as well for businesses. In my experience it's not so much about the economics in regards to accessibility, but it's also the reputational risk to businesses and organisations by not providing access. Stella Young, God bless her soul, she really shifted the paradigm around because of her use of social media, posting access failures. If you've got accessibility in place, use it because people with disability will come, and if you don't, well then we're going to let everyone know about it and showcase as worst practice, not best practice.

The UK Business Disability Forum, in partnership with the [Extra Costs Commission](#), recently coordinated an update on their walk-away pound research to help businesses justify investment in accessibility of their products and services. The Commission asked people with disability whether they had left a business or shop because of poor disability awareness or understanding. This isn't even just about physical access, it's about awareness. So 75% of people with disability and their families said they had done this and also 75% of people with disability and 76% of parents or carers.

Some comments were "I left all of the businesses - I left the business not out of anger but because I couldn't sustain coping with their facilities and attitude, despite me trying to explain" and also "the bank suggested that I should find another bank because they could not address my disability issues. Either bank staff were untrained or they were poorly trained."

This is still quite prevalent today. The Commission asked those who had left the business how much they used to spend every month at the place they had left. These are in pounds, you can almost double it. So kind of high-end retail, 40 pounds; restaurants, pubs, clubs 40 pounds; supermarkets, 200 pounds; energy, 84 pounds; phone or internet provider, 40 pounds; transport provider, 30 pounds; bank or building society, 600 pounds. That was just for people with disability and then there were other figures for parents and carers.

But anyway if we multiply these figures, we could estimate that 8.4 million adults have walked away from a business because of poor disability awareness or lack of access and to Sally's point, this in turn could equate to \$1.8 billion or equivalent to \$3.14 billion Australian dollars not a year, but every month. That's massive. And further to that, the Commission was also interested to know whether or not people with disability and their families had influenced other people. If we all go to a restaurant the four of us and it's not accessible, we'll move on - yes, we'll move on. But we'll also tell our families and friends and at least 50% of those won't go to that business as well.

So to Kelly's point, can businesses afford to not be accessible? I think not. At Sydney Festival a couple of years ago they got a complaint in regard to accessibility on opening day. That complaint was first page in the Daily Telegraph here and they rang me up 9.30 in the morning and said "we've got a bad article in the telegraph, help us out, we need to resolve it first thing tomorrow morning so we get a better article". They definitely know they can't afford bad accessibility as well.

So the momentum is there, the NDIS, the strategy is driving that and through all the work we're doing we can definitely make it happen. What I love about the video I showed is that it transcends sport. It's about every facet of life and the message is yes we can, yes we want to, and yes we will. Thank you.

QUESTIONS

DELEGATE: I was really, really fascinated about the data because in our New Zealand disability strategy we do not collect enough data to then provide the evidence that we need to support our arguments. So I'm really hoping you can pass this on to our lovely

conference organisers that we can have some additional data, additional research to support the work we do. So that walk away pound research sounds fantastic.

MS SALLY CODDINGTON: About the data, there's not a lot out there. So I know - I'm sure Paul has read the stuff that I quoted and I know that I've read the stuff that Paul quoted, so I think that we still need to keep creating data.

MR PAUL NUNNARI: Yes. And just to add to that quickly, I'm starting with events to incorporate accessibility questionnaires into their exit surveys, so that might be something you can do in your space if you're working in the event space or business space, any exit incorporate accessibility. We do it with New Year's Eve, we pose a question did you attend New Year's Eve festivities because accessibility considerations were provided for the event and over 85% of respondents ticked yes. It's clear if you provide the accessible experience, people will come to it. And likewise the opposite question was posed would you attend if it wasn't provided and 75% said no. So it's clear that the data is out there, it's just a matter of bringing it all together.

DELEGATE: Ro, I had a question about your role in Lendlease and I know in speaking to you at other times that you're clearly passionate about the topic and very keen to see more of this happening. I just wondered, do you have supporters at Lendlease or are you a lone voice, how does it work for you?

MS RO CORONEOS: Some days, yes. It's an idea and it shouldn't be an idea really, but it's a new way of looking at how we design places. So to go to say, an in-house design team and say to a bunch of architects "Here's something I prepared earlier, what do you reckon", and for them to go "Oh, my God, we've been trying to get this off the ground for like five years and how is it that you've been able to do it". I have to say because I'm on a project and I'm a little bit isolated in that regard from, if you like, the machinery of an organisation, I do also in my role see it as a kind of product development type role where we do have to come up with new ideas and it shouldn't be like that. But I'm given the space to be creative and take it to the next level in terms of how we deliver our urban regeneration spaces. I've had that imprimatur, the approval, from our managing director on the project to do that. So that means then I can say "Really, are we really that world class in this space, or have you thought about this?" and go away and work something up. Then have that internal engagement and for folks to go "oh, yeah, okay, yes, let's adopt that". Then how do you integrate the principles and approaches into your standard operating procedure. It sounds a bit dry - and there's a cultural change exercise in that because it means people are going to have to start being a bit more mindful about these additional elements or looking at how you design a space in a different way earlier on, and so on, as I've described.

Am I alone in that regard? No, but to embed it into retail projects or other commercial projects. I'm finding that there are other pockets of the organisation that are referring to the Design for Diversity guidelines and incorporating it into their design practice. I've even had the Green Building Council adopt the guidelines as a standard that would be used for the Green Star standard, which is how you design sustainable buildings. So in the social sustainability component, they're taking the guidelines and using that as a credit that you can get for innovation in a design in a building.

DELEGATE: Other than the obvious, how do you measure the social impact of universal design?

THE HON. KELLY VINCENT: I think that's a really good question. Because - and I'm not a researcher, I'm not an expert in absolutely anything at all, but - no, I'm deadly serious, don't laugh, but my feeling is that that we will have achieved it when there is nothing left to measure because think about what we measure at the moment - complaints, things that are wrong, you know, everything that's wrong is basically what we're measuring. Everything that we're missing out on.

So it's basically I think when there's no specific research project left because people with disabilities aren't having to make their case all the time is when it will be succeeding. And that might be quite controversial to those of you in the room who are researchers and you can tell me if I'm right or wrong and we can go to an accessible pub and debate that, I'm looking forward to it, but that's my gut feeling, that when there's nothing wrong left to measure then we'll have succeeded.

DELEGATE: This is for all of you. With inclusion, universal design and everything, why can't we just get it legislated? What's holding it up? I think Kelly you probably have the most experience with this. What's stopping COAG from saying every new building has to be - it's all simple for everyone in this room, but people outside aren't doing it.

THE HON. KELLY VINCENT: There is still so much misinformation out there which is exactly why we're up here having this discussion about the economics of inclusion. So much debate is still about the economics of it. We're still looking at that as a deficit, we're still looking at that money in deficit even though it could well be cost neutral rather than an investment. The more we bring our friends to parties, to venues, to concerts and the more we can bring ourselves there, it's an investment in getting that audience in to that venue. So we really need to flip that conversation around I think. It happens incredibly slowly because anyone who is involved in politics knows that people like developers have often an extraordinary amount of sway in these debates. I also think that part of talking about the economic side of it and flipping that around. We have disability groups and yes we're learning to collaborate a bit more across different types of disability and so on, but then we have single parent support groups and on and on and on it goes. I wonder what might happen if we all got into a room together and said "even though I don't have a wheelchair or a walker, I have my kids in the pram and I'm always lifting the pram up and down".

Recently I had a very public stoush with the Adelaide City Council about a scheme they had for grants for the renovation of a shop front, things like new furniture and a lick of paint and that sort of thing. Dignity for Disability came out swinging and said you can enjoy the fresh lick of paint as long as you can get into the building. We were contacted by a number of parents saying thank you because I feel like even though you're talking about this from a disability perspective, it is about my kids and the pram and my nan or mum with the walker. So we all need to get over our own silos and work together to lobby. I know that's a far, far more complicated task than I'm making it sound, but I think it's something that we do need to consider very seriously. I don't know if that answers the question at all.

DELEGATE: Kelly, just following on from that last question, the birth of the NDIS - I was one of the people who put through a cost benefit submission to them. There's a government

report, the Productivity Commission Report, the government goes to all the time to look at expenditure and look at what's a good cost benefit spend. Obviously they've committed billions to the rollout of the NDIS. So just based on that last question, universal design should be borne out of the development of the NDIS if we're going to follow through with the argument from the start about why we're doing the NDIS.

THE HON. KELLY VINCENT: I think it's really important to remember that the NDIS was essentially conceptualised by a group of economists. Ultimately the NDIS is not about making people feel good, about oh, we'll give Paul a nice new wheelchair so he can do whatever he wants to do. It is about enabling the economic empowerment of people with disabilities and family carers also, a lot of the research shows because of the independence of people with disabilities, family carers who might have had to surrender work commitments to support their family member, will be able to return to the work force.

MR NICK RUSHWORTH: One of my enormous responsibilities each and every year is to set the theme for National Brain Injury Awareness Week. The last theme for the Week was young stroke. So while the median age is around 75 years in this country, 1 in 4 strokes happens to a person of working age, 1 in 5 to a person less than 55 years of age. At the end this woman who was in her 60s, maybe 70s, came up to me and said, "That was really, really great, if not inspiring". But I went to exactly the same event in the 1970s. So what fascinates me is, what aren't builders, what aren't developers, architects, and economists hearing? What aren't they getting from advocates that can make this kind of change possible? What do they want to hear that they're not hearing?

MS RO CORONEOS: Wow, there's a diverse group of people in that. Look, my observation is - and it's my personal opinion - that they are quite siloed in the way that they look at issues at times and if you're looking at a development each comes to the table with a particular expertise and with a tendency to work in somewhat of a linear fashion. The other thing is a culture of compliance and what I've been talking about is actually going a step above that and actually embracing voluntarily and saying yes, we're going to embark on this. But it's about having that conversation not in techny-speak, but in human terms about this is how a design does or doesn't deliver.

The construction mindset is if you're the client, you just tell me, if you want a green box, I'll build a green box because it's a very cost-focused sector. They're not going to voluntarily go "well, by the way I thought I might do this as well" because there's a cost to that. So there's no incentive from a builder's perspective to do anything over and above what the client has asked for. From a developer's perspective, their own lived experience can often be quite privileged and quite removed from understanding an everyday person's experience, an end user's experience. There's a cultural aspect to it. So someone has to bring that to the fore and say - join the dots in effect and say "Do you realise that if your design or your building doesn't meet the needs of the end users, sure you've done it, you've delivered it, but is it the best outcome and what does that say about you in terms of your brand and your offering and your design because it's something that's there for a very long time". Advocates need to be more visible. The conversation has to come to the table. At the moment they're quite removed - in short.

MS SALLY CODDINGTON: I don't think it's about what they're not hearing. It's not about us telling anyone anything. I think ultimately at the most basic level the difference between

1960 and now is that people are still not disability confident. People are still really uncomfortable with disability and they just don't want to prioritise it.

MR PAUL NUNNARI: Can I add too in the political legislative context as well. It's about having a standard to tick against. When you go through Bills and ultimately law, it's all about guidelines and reference to something that people need to meet, convention to comply with, and as an observer, I think that's the universal design concepts greatest enemy. I don't think most people get what universal design means to be honest, and I think everyone's perspective is quite different. So it's hard to have - when you've got a building code and you've got a width of a ramp or whatever, there's a clear measurement that you've got to meet. With universal design it's very different and I don't think government is there yet in that thinking. Kelly, correct me if I'm wrong, but government is quite risk averse and if they get criticised for something, they need to say well, we did it and it was measured against this to this standard.

I believe it will come. I can use the example of flexible working hours. 10 years ago that was something that was completely foreign at least in government, but I think we're getting there and I think universal design is just building up momentum and it will keep happening. I think also, again as an observer, there's a bit of conflict between your traditional access consultants, who are that compliance based, with the philosophy of universal design. I think it's about those two groups getting together and saying we're actually all on the same page and then using Ro's point in regard to dignity of access, let's make it as inclusive and accessible as we can for everyone and I think when we get to that mindset, then hopefully other people actually get what the whole concept is about. But we're not there yet.

MS RO CORONEOS: It depends on what the client is asking for also. If the client is not aware or engaged about that, then it falls through the cracks. It will become a compliance item, but there's no push, there's no impetus to take it beyond that because the client's view of the world doesn't contemplate in the same way either.

DELEGATE: First, I think there's a gravitas issue. 20% of people identify with having disability, but still that's not the majority of people, but it will happen because we've got a rapidly ageing population. The baby boomers are the most wealthy, most educated and most cantankerous group of people who have probably lived in recent generations. They won't no accept that the environment has to change, so it will change, there's no doubt. It will change because they'll make it change, we'll make it change. But I think people like Kelly and other people who advocate in a very positive way, that's the other aspect of it.

To pick up on Paul about education, look at the Livable Housing Design Guidelines. One of the issues they had when dealing with that, they couldn't call it universal design because that wasn't universal design. They had to come up with a new term which was Livable Housing. So I think there is an issue of language, it's about people understanding what universal design is, but also how do we make it so natural that we don't even - to pick up on Kelly's point - we don't have to have this conference in 10 years' time because it's all embedded, there's no such thing as universal design in 10 years' time. It will happen, but we have to get through this stage and we have to push on different fronts.

MS RO CORONEOS: I feel like this is where sustainability was about 15 years ago and it was all about trying to get people on board with the concept of why it was good business or the right thing to do and I think the landscape of social sustainability, and I characterise this as part of that landscape, is not that dissimilar to that sort of debate that used to happen. So I do feel that it will be mainstreamed and it will become business as usual, but I think it's about the discourse of getting everybody on board with the concept of what needs to be done beyond just compliance and about the experience of inclusion and what that looks like and having examples of what that looks like that are very tangible.

DELEGATE: Just to shift it a little more to education and again commenting on your idea of sustainability, being an educator for 11 years of young university students, I found that they're becoming more receptive to the idea of designing for people with disability. There is quite a significant attitude change, that it is almost possible to teach empathy to these young students. I feel like a lot of our efforts are spent on educating adults, policy makers, lawyers, architects, builders, developers, and really the emphasis is not on educating the younger generations, but when you look at sustainability, for instance, in our primary schools and our high schools, it's embedded into the curriculum of State schools and private schools. So really if we want change and these young people are going to be the leaders of tomorrow, we really need to start to educate about universal design, inclusivity, thinking about differing embodiments, into our younger generations because again there seems to be a gap there.

MS RO CORONEOS: Totally agree. And actually it's funny, we did an e-learning portal just on that point, but in the context of sustainability - we did an e-learning portal which was looking at the sustainability design principles, of which social sustainability sits within, and have that on our website. It is line with the year 9 and 10 geography curriculum. That is now being used as a resource for teachers and students in the New South Wales public school - well, school system. This should be no different. So it's about people turning their minds to it and saying what does that mean, what does it look like, where are the voices that talk about that and then having those examples and having the sorts of activities for children to learn and understand the value of diversity.

DELEGATE. I just wanted to follow up on the comment about COAG, about why don't we just do it, and also on the issue of the client asking for it. Some of the research that I've done is when I hear the phrase "if the client asks for it we'll do it". My experience is that when the client asks for it, you're considered different and an outlier and when you're an outlier, a statistical outlier, you don't get listened to, which is the point you were making, Sally, that people aren't listening because it's not normal.

The other thing, as you said, it is the silo thing within the industry, no one person owns the whole process of a development or building a house or anything like that. So the only thing that glues the system together is actually regulation. Now, that being the case, you'd be thinking - so where is COAG in all of this? If anybody heard Margaret Ward yesterday morning, you would know that COAG is still not listening in spite of the NDIS, in spite of a whole lot of other things, and it's because it's - it's not because the arguments aren't there. We've got Landcom with their stuff as well, there's stuff out there but nobody is listening to it because even though we dispute the cost argument, they're still not listening because they don't want to know.

I'm off my soap box now and to my question. I people wanted to go away with some kind of argument, some kind of comment from you about what they could take back to their workplace: "so I went to this universal design conference and there was a panel at the end of the session and it was about the economics and this is the key message", I'm wondering if you have a key message that might be helpful for us to go away with to tell our bosses, if you like, or whoever it is that we work with.

MS SALLY CODDINGTON: So I would say some people have kind of inferred that 20% of the population identifying as having a disability is small. I actually think that's a lot of people and when you combine them with their friends and family, those people who are making choices depending on how accessible and how welcome they feel I would say that there's lots of people with a disability and they've got lots of money. That's the way I would sum it up.

THE HON. KELLY VINCENT: Going back to that comment about why don't we just do it? At the risk of sounding too positive, but it is happening, we are doing it, we are doing it by having this conference. All things in context and that doesn't mean we don't keep pushing and pushing and pushing, questioning, challenging, all the time. But to give you a quick example, Parliament House, it's not been that long we've had accessible toilets in Parliament House. It sounds outrageous, until you look at it in the context that it wasn't even that long ago that we didn't have female toilets at all because women just did not go into that building. So all things in context, we are doing it.

To bring it back to that question what would I say to a boss in an office is essentially which side of history do we want to be on. Paul's example of other businesses seeing that festival in Sydney on the front page of the paper and quickly getting their act together because they didn't want to end up in that situation shows that people don't want to end up on the same side of history that we are presently on.

So my point would be the client should be asking really. It is about - when I go to an event organiser and they say "We want to incorporate access into our event" I can say "Well, we can do the basic stuff or we can do the best practice stuff and I say do you want to be a leader or do you want to be a follower? That's my comment. I know I automatically want to lead and I think we all do, but sometimes we just don't have the confidence or knowledge on how to, but if you've got that, then go to your boss and say I'll show you the way.

MS RO CORONEOS: Prove up an example to show what's possible and it will be on your watch.

DELEGATE: We're two-thirds of the way through 2016. Where do we go from here to make a real difference or do we find ourselves sitting in the same space next year with the same arguments and the same topics.

MS RO CORONEOS: I can say we are working on a Design for Dignity retail guideline at the moment and hopefully by building awareness and having those conversations internally and having projects that are embedding those principles we will have examples of what's possible. That's where we're going as an organisation at the moment.

MR PAUL NUNNARI: I'm really happy to say I'm working Newcastle City Council and we're working on some highly innovative inclusive design for part of their precinct. So watch this space and hopefully that team will be presenting on it next year. It's happening. It is happening.

MS SALLY CODDINGTON: Changing Places. Just putting it out there, Newcastle Council. Nicky needs a changing place.

THE HON. KELLY VINCENT: Changing Places is actually a great example. This might be a frustrating answer, but I don't think there's any one thing that we can do next year or the year after exactly because as Paul and other speakers have said, universal design is not a destination, it's a journey that is always going to be, it's not a standard in terms of compliance, it's a thought process, and therefore it's always changing. So I don't think there's any one thing we can do to say yes, we have done universal design because by the time we meet again next year new technologies, new exciting technologies that we can't think about right now will have been invented. I really am being too positive today, aren't I?

So there is no one thing that we can do, but we can work on projects like Changing Places, and Dignity for Disability is this close to getting up, it's one we have very close. We can increase compliance through draft legislation we have to increase compliance with existing standards as well as pushing for universal design and all of these things add up to better understanding because as much as I understand we need to be educating younger people in getting that attitude flowing through, with all due respect a 5-year-old child can't build me an accessible house right now and I need that. So it needs to be coming from both ends absolutely, but we need to treat them both equally I think.

End of session.