

Attitude Foundation

Business Case - Summary

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# Introduction

Attitude Foundation Limited was established in 2014 by people who are passionate about the inclusion of people with disability in society. Attitude Foundation’s vision is:

*To live in an Australia in which people with disability are welcomed and fully included on an equal basis in every aspect of life.*

The Foundation’s goal is to drive a material change in attitudes and lives through the creation of a television documentary series with real stories of people with disability told by people with disability.

The documentaries will change people’s attitudes by delivering insight and shaping a new understanding of disability in Australia, framed in terms of possibilities and positivity. They will not focus on a victim or hero mentality but show people with disability as agents of their own destiny to drive a fundamental attitudinal shift in our community.

The content and targeted focus we propose is essential to spark conversations, deliver subtle messaging and position people with disability as role models, leaders and to be successful in life.

Attitude will seek funding support for an Australian documentary television series to be broadcast on national television which will be reinforced by a supporting web portal, Public Relations campaign incorporating social media amplification, and independent research to measure the effectiveness of the campaign in promoting positive attitudes, beliefs and behaviours toward people with a disability.

# Executive Summary

This business case will demonstrate the strong case for changing Australian society’s attitudes toward people with disability and the compelling statistics (across education, employment, housing, poverty, justice) that illustrate why change is so sorely needed in Australia.

It articulates the benefits to be gained from full participation of people with disability in Australian society. From an economic rationale alone, Australia’s GDP could rise by $40 billion in the next decade if the current employment rate for Australians with disability is increased by one-third. Smart businesses are also poised to gain economically from making their services accessible to the growing market of customers with disability – people with spending power.

Greater inclusion and employment opportunities for people with disability lead to increased income, greater spending power and higher living standards. A more inclusive society means that people with disability can participate in broad community activities, gain independence and self-worth, and enjoy positive health benefits. Families and carers also benefit, as well as the wider community – mainstream Australia.

We will show how documentary films and TV series have been highly effective in changing attitudes towards some of the most important global issues of our time. The documentary examples provided demonstrate that audiences can be inspired – via compelling and engaging stories - to question their long-held assumptions and to change their behavior.

Our *Attitude* documentary series aims to follow suit, breaking down social and community misconceptions to create a more inclusive and aware society, which in turn will lead to better education and employment opportunities for people with disability, a boosted economy where individuals themselves have greater spending power, feelings of greater self-worth, and better overall health.

Our proposed research will measure base line attitudes as well as attitudinal change resulting from broadcast of our TV series – the first research of its kind in Australia. We aim to build on this strong body of evidence-based research over time – research that will be valuable to society and business as a whole, which we will actively publicise in service of our goal of creating a more inclusive society without discrimination.

Forward-thinking businesses that invest in this scenario want to play a role in the creation of this inclusive and progressive society, and are able to grasp the long-term benefits for society and business, particularly in the social and economic arenas.

# The Case for Change

There is a very strong case for changing Australian society’s attitudes toward people with disability. As part of reviewing the NDIS proposal from the Federal government, PWC made the following statement:

*“The biggest challenge for Australia is to provide an environment for change which allows for a cultural shift across all parts of our society. Active participation of those with a disability in society generally can only occur with a change in attitude. This is something that can’t be legislated; people need to see the reason why change is important.[[1]](#footnote-1)”*

Some compelling statistics that illustrate why the change is so sorely needed.

* 4.2 million Australians have a disability (or almost 20% of the population).
* In Australia, employment of people with disability lags well behind, at a rate of 39.8% compared to 79.4% for people without a disability.[[2]](#footnote-2) This ranks Australia 21st out of 29 OECD countries in employment participation rates for those with a disability.[[3]](#footnote-3)
* Australia also has a poor track record of recognition of human rights for people with disability, ranking 27 out of 27 OECD countries for people with a disability living in or near poverty[[4]](#footnote-4) or put another way, 45% of those with a disability in Australia are living either near or below the poverty line which is double the OECD average of 22%.[[5]](#footnote-5)
* The population of Australia is ageing – so, while there are currently 5 people of working age for every person aged 65 and over, this number will almost halve (2.7) by 2050.[[6]](#footnote-6)
* In 2009, approx. 1.3 million Australians had a severe or profound disability, however by 2099 it is estimated this statistic will increase to approx. 4 million Australians.[[7]](#footnote-7)
* In 2009, 25% of people with a profound or severe disability aged 15 to 64 completed Year 12. In comparison, 55% of non-disabled people completed Year 12.[[8]](#footnote-8) Education is clearly a significant driver of future employment opportunities.
* There is a disproportionately higher representation of people with disability in Australia’s justice system.

A number of reports exist supporting the proposition that greater inclusion of people with disability will drive social and economic change.

Triggering a transformational social and cultural shift to improve inclusion for people with disability will provide benefits to:

* The community;
* Workplaces;
* The economy; and
* The individuals themselves.[[9]](#footnote-9)

### The Community

Attitudinal change to create greater inclusion of people with disability and accessibility for people with disability will bring about broad community change. There are a number of areas the community will benefit but the most significant is mainstream cultural attitudes, and improving the Australian community’s understanding of people with disability. The most common issues or misconceptions about people with disability relate to the following.

#### Community Misconceptions:

* Assumptions and stereotypes about people with disability and how they live their lives, reflected in the placing of people with disability on a pedestal when they do or achieve everyday things, (otherwise known as “inspiration porn” arising from “low expectations”) or conversely, offering pity and sympathy or referring to “suffering” when meeting people with disability.
* A limited understanding of the phenomenon of “disability” through the traditional “medical model” that follows the premise that disability is a “deficit” and people with disability are therefore in need of being “cured” or “fixed”, as opposed to a broader understanding of disability through the “social model” that recognizes that the experience of disability results from the interaction between the way a person’s body or mind function and an environment that has been constructed on assumptions about “typical” function and which are filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers for people who don’t fall within the “typical” function parameters. The social model seeks to change society in order to accommodate people who do not function in “typical” ways; it does not seek to change such people to accommodate society.[[10]](#footnote-10)  It supports the view that people with disability have a right to be fully participating citizens on an equal basis with others and it calls for social systems and design that recognize human diversity and accommodates disability as an expression of it.
* The assumption that all disabilities are visible, whereas the majority of disabilities are not visible and include mental health conditions and cognitive or intellectual disability such as dyslexia, as well as hearing and vision impairments.

#### Community Issues

* Housing availability for people with disabilities, particularly young people with disabilities is a significant issue in Australia. Nearly 300 people under 50 years are admitted to nursing homes in Australia each year. Their lives are characterized by boredom, loneliness and grief, with 53% receiving a visit from a friend less than once per year.[[11]](#footnote-11)
* Access to justice in the criminal justice system for people with disabilities is a significant problem in every jurisdiction in Australia. Whether a person with disability is the victim of a crime, accused of a crime or a witness, they are at increased risk of being disrespected and disbelieved and of not enjoying equality before the law.[[12]](#footnote-12)
* Education levels of people with a disability are significantly lower than those without a disability. Education is clearly a significant contributor to future employment opportunities and financial independence. In 2009, 25% of people with a profound or severe disability aged 15 to 64 completed Year 12. In comparison, 55% of non-disabled people completed Year 12.[[13]](#footnote-13)
* The poverty rate of people with a disability is currently 2.5 times the rate of poverty experienced by the general population.[[14]](#footnote-14)
* Representation of people with disability in the media does not reflect the community in which we live. Very few people with disability are included in advertising campaigns or television programming, limiting mainstream Australia’s perception of our community and reinforcing marginalization in other areas. Similar issues have been reported for a number of other minority groups, particularly the LGBTI community, indigenous Australians and religious groups.

### Workplaces

#### Business benefits from increased employment

A report from the Business Council of Australia found that in order to remain competitive, business needs to reconsider methods of attracting and retaining employees. Attracting, recruiting and retaining employees with disability can provide a significant and often overlooked opportunity for business, and a solution to Australia’s skills crisis.

As the Business Council of Australia Chief Executive said when launching the report, “Inclusion, diversity and flexible work practices aren’t just fashionable concepts, they are at the heart of workplaces of the future. Those workplaces need to be designed to unlock the best in all Australians.”

“For people with disability, employment is not just about a job. It’s about being valued, useful and included.

For business, it’s in their best interest to have access to diverse talent and a workforce that’s inclusive of the community.

For Australia, national prosperity is about helping create the context for everyone to participate and contribute.”

Organisations that recruit people with disability have found they:

* have access to a larger talent pool whom frequently bring forward new ideas and ways of doing business due to their diverse experiences and background;
* enjoy higher employee engagement and staff retention rates (avoiding recruiting and re-training costs);
* achieve greater productivity (happy staff make productive staff); and
* potentially avoid any reputational issues and costs associated with complaints of discrimination

#### Business benefits from increased customer base

Organisations that understand the impact of disability on their customers will reach a wider market. A UK survey found that a staggering 83% of people with disability had avoided a business, having been unable or unwilling to make a purchase.[[15]](#footnote-15) Common factors included inaccessible premises, rude or prejudiced staff and poorly designed products.

Businesses that fail to make their products and services accessible to people with disability, or who don’t build their expertise in welcoming customers with disability, risk missing out on a great deal of business. Apart from the 20% of Australians who have a disability, family members, friends and colleagues will also avoid businesses that are not accessible.

An Access Economics report forecasting consumer trends from 2001 to 2011 predicted that mature consumers are the largest growth market in Australia, accounting for half of all growth in retail spending in the decade. It’s clear that mature consumers are more likely to have higher disposable incomes, and statistics show they are also more likely to have a disability. The rate of disability increases to over 56% by age 65. If a business wants to tap into this lucrative customer base, it must be accessible.

Forward-thinking organisations should therefore be looking for ways to improve their confidence and capability in meeting the needs of the four million Australians with disability, who are people with spending power.

### The Economy

Australia has participation and productivity challenges that need to be addressed to achieve the growth required to underpin Australia’s long-term prosperity and social wellbeing.

There is an economic imperative to increase labour force participation and help to address Australia’s impending labour shortages, while at the same time, reducing fiscal pressures associated with welfare dependency.[[16]](#footnote-16) Employing more people with disability can assist in plugging these gaps when considering “the vast majority of people with a disability can, and do want to work and be as financially independent as possible”.[[17]](#footnote-17)

In 2012, the Australian Network on Disability commissioned a study which projected the outcome if governments and employers increased the current employment rate for Australians with disability by one-third over the next decade (from 54% to 64%) as well as reduced the unemployment rate for people with disability by 0.9 percentage points to 6.9%.

The results indicated:

* the increase in workforce participation would result in a **cumulative boost to Australia’s GDP of a $40 billion in the next decade**; and
* if unemployment was also reduced, **GDP could increase by an additional $43 billion in the coming decade.** [[18]](#footnote-18)

The PWC review also reported similar findings, noting Australia could achieve additional GDP of almost $50 billion (a further 1.4% contribution to GDP) in 2050 if Australia moved into the top eight OECD countries in employing people with a disability.[[19]](#footnote-19) It also found increasing the number of carers in the workforce or their number of hours worked, would lead to additional GDP of $1.5 billion per annum.[[20]](#footnote-20)

### The Individual

Greater inclusion and employment opportunities for people with disability have obvious benefits: greater income and with this, higher living standards and financial independence. Employment can also contribute to a sense of identify and self-worth and have positive health impacts for some people with disability.[[21]](#footnote-21)

If we can transform our society to be more inclusive of people with disability (not just through employment initiatives) we will see greater participation in broader community activities and further independence, which are both protective against mental health problems.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Alongside this shift exists the potential to realise significant benefits for others such as the individual’s family and carers.

Our documentary series aims to break down social and community misconceptions and create a more inclusive and accepting society, which in turn will lead to better education and employment opportunities for people with disability, a boosted economy where employers are not apprehensive about employing jobseekers with a disability and the individuals themselves have greater spending power, feelings of greater self-worth, and achieve better overall health.

## Attitude Initiatives

In order for the Foundation to deliver on its ambitions, there are a number of milestones and initiatives to be considered:

### Television Series

The primary activity of the Foundation will be the development of a TV series to be aired on mainstream television. The series will not focus on a victim or hero mentality but will follow the stories of people with disability engaging in life and relationships, working and undertaking activities in the community. The stories will not portray people with disability as 'amazing' or 'inspirational' but will show them authentically and depict the reality of life for people with disability, and all the complexity this may entail. Some of the subjects may be people who have achieved extraordinary things. Other stories may be of people who have quietly created a unique meaning from their disability. The individual experience and perspective of disability will be respected and this will result in a broad diversity of disability being depicted across the series.

By engaging the audience in compelling stories, the series aims to create an understanding of the issues surrounding disability, and will show the benefits to be gained by the full inclusion of people with disability, and challenge and change the pre-existing assumptions and attitudes toward people with disability.

The Foundation strongly believes a documentary television series of this nature could be effective in shifting attitudes to people with disability.

* The time is right for the series with the continuing rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme across the country.
* The Australian national television broadcaster has received an informal proposal from the Foundation and responded positively. It is anticipated that it will be willing to broadcast the series as the content fits well within the strategic delivery of content associated with diversity.
* If ABC does not proceed with screening the TV series, Attitude Foundation will then liaise with commercial TV channels in Australia (and potentially abroad). We believe the content will be be a ‘good fit’ for broadcast on such commercial outlets, as an alternative to the ABC.
* There are several experienced Australian production companies that have the relevant experience, reputation and relationships as well as the infrastructure needed to produce a high quality and authentic series.
* Television is an ideal vehicle for delivery of positive messages about people with disability, with free-to-air television attracting large mainstream audiences.
* There have been several other successful television programs about people with disability, indicating audience interest in this content.
* There is research that indicates a willingness amongst television viewers to seek out entertainment and storytelling that is meaningful. It further found that dramatic films and documentaries inspire audiences to change their behavior by challenging them to question long-held beliefs. These stories have the capacity to raise questions about a particular issue and motivate an individual to change assumptions, investigate a cause or even join one.

### Web Portal

The Attitude Foundation is committed to starting the conversation of changing attitudes prior to the screening of the television series, amplifying the messaging during the screening of the series as well as continuing the conversation once the series has aired. Therefore, a fully accessible web portal will supplement the television series and will act as an online hub where viewers can access the content digitally, engage with additional content about disability and connect with the disability community. The platform, content and all communications must be accessible. There are a number of options available to ensure Attitude provides only highly accessible content. Ultimately the web portal will act as a key hub for mainstream viewers and disability sector stakeholders to engage in furthering their conversations.

An administrator resource of the web portal is incorporated in the plan.

### Research

There has only been limited research into attitudinal studies globally to date. The Foundation has been in discussions with two university academics with the goal of commissioning unique research that will measure attitudinal change in Australia. Research is considered a vital element of the proposal to ensure the Foundation can measure the effectiveness of the intervention in changing attitudes. The proposed research would be game-changing in Australia, and would provide a strong foundation for further research over time. It would consider:

* a population representative "community attitudes to disability" base line survey, the first of its kind in Australia; and
* an evaluation of the effectiveness of the documentary series in promoting positive attitudes, beliefs and intended behaviours towards people with a disability.

## Fundraising and Sponsorship

The Attitude Foundation has secured the ANZ Banking Group as the founding sponsor because ANZ is the fourth-largest bank in Australia and employs over 50,000 people so creating a diverse workforce is a top business priority. Group Head of Talent, Resourcing & Diversity, Sara van Vliet, explains: “Diversity is important, but on its own, not an end goal. It’s only when you leverage the unique skills and talent that you really do realise the benefits. And to do that, you need to create an inclusive culture, and that is something we have intentionally focused on at ANZ”. As such, ANZ is committed to developing its disability confidence through changing attitudes. The foundation is now seeking to secure a second and third sponsor to ensure appropriate funding to deliver its initiatives. Sponsorship may be in the form of both financial and in-kind sponsorship. Key sponsorship will be sought from Government (both State and Federal), corporate and philanthropic organisations (including some grants). Sponsorship of the first TV Series is the primary goal of this business case, with further series on the back of the success of the first series and the research findings making the basis for a second business case.

## Overheads

All three elements of the proposal will require a small amount of overhead to administer operations. In line with most not-for-profit organisations, these costs will be keep to a minimum (initially by asking staff to work from home rather than renting office premises as an example), however there are some costs that are considered critical to ensuring successful delivery. This includes the cost of an Executive Officer/Chief Executive as well as staff to deliver the promotion of the series and execution of the social media strategy.

## Financials

**Table 1: Financial Budget**

| **Initiatives** | **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| TV Series production  (13 episodes per annum) | 1,300,000 | 1,325,000 | 1,350,000 |
| Web portal  (Video enabled, accessible & maintained) | 50,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| Audio description & multiple language captioning | 30,000 | 30,000 | 31,000 |
| Production of accessible trailers | 20,000 | 20,000 | 21,000 |
| Research | 150,000 | 68,000 | - |
| Overheads  (Salary & wages, promotion, fees etc.) | 243,000 | 296,000 | 300,000 |
| **Total expenditure** | **1,793,000** | **1,749,000** | **1,712,000** |

## Overall timeline and milestones

The most significant driver of the timeline and milestones is the television series production. All other initiatives would be scheduled according to the TV series. It is also important to note the scheduling below is an estimate and would be determined once a production company is confirmed. Below is a high level summary of the timeline for the production of the TV series and the approximate budget associated with each stage:

**Table 2: TV series timelines and budget**

| **Activity** | **Timeline** | **Budget** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Research & commissioning meetings with broadcaster | 8 weeks | $65,000 (5%) |
| Pre-production | 6 weeks | $390,000 (30%) |
| Production (approx. 1 week per episode) | 14 weeks | $520,000 (40%) |
| Post production | 18 weeks | $260,000 (20%) |
| Sound mixing | 2 weeks |  |
| Picture mastering | 2 weeks |  |
| Delivery of material to broadcaster |  | $65,000 (5%) |
| **Total** | **50 weeks** | **$1,300,000** |

1. *Disability expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia*, PWC, November 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers - A Synthesis of Findings across OECD Countries*. OECD. (2010) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Disability expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia*, PWC, November 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers - A Synthesis of Findings across OECD Countries*. OECD. (2010) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Disability expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia*, PWC, (November 2011) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Australia to 2050: Future* challenges. Intergenerational Report 2010 Commonwealth of Australia (2010) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC) CURF, ABS Population Projections, 2006 – 2101*, Series B. Cat. No. 3222.0., ABS (2009) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. ABS. (2011). Disability Australia 2009. Cat. no. 4446.0.   [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Willing to Work: Australian Human Rights Commission*: Issue Paper: Employment discrimination against Australians with disability, 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <http://www.pwd.org.au/student-section/the-social-model-of-disability.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <https://www.summerfoundation.org.au/what-we-do/the-issue/> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Equal before the law: towards disability justice strategies*, Australian Human Rights Commission, February 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. ABS. (2011). Disability Australia 2009. Cat. no. 4446.0.   [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Willing to Work*: *Issue Paper: Employment discrimination against Australians with disability,* Australian Human Rights Commission, 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *The Walk Away Pound Survey*, Employers Forum on Disability and Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (UK), 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. *The economic benefits of increasing employment for people with disability*, Deloitte Access Economics, August 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (NDS, 2011) [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Deloitte Access Economics, 2011, op.cit [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. OECD, 2010, Sickness, Disability and Work: Breaking the Barriers - A Synthesis of Findings across OECD Countries, PwC calculations   [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Disability Care and Support, Productivity Commission Inquiry Report. No. 54, 31 July 2011   [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. *Willing to Work*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2015, op cit. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. *Disability expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia*, PWC, (November 2011) [↑](#footnote-ref-22)