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3 November 2023

Senator Marielle Smith
Chair, Legislation Committee
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Delivered by email to community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Smith

Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee Bill 2023 [Provisions]

We welcome the Government's efforts to establish the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee (the Committee) to address the entrenched disadvantage of many groups, including people with disability, and thank the Committee for the opportunity to comment on the Economic Inclusion Advisory Committee Bill 2023 [Provisions].

People with Disability Australia (PWDA) People with Disability Australia (PWDA) is Australia's national peak disability organisation, representing the 1 in 6 Australians with disability. We are the leading disability rights advocacy and representative organisation and the only national cross-disability organisation representing the interests of people with all kinds of disability. We are a not-for-profit and non-government organisation, and our membership is comprised of people with disability, as well as organisations primarily constituted by people with disability, including the **PWDA Board** and many members of **our staff**.

We strongly support Clause 11(3)(a) of the Bill, which requires that at least one of the Committee members is an Indigenous person. Additionally, **we recommend that an identical clause is added that requires at least one Committee member is a person with disability.**

The importance of disability representation

People with disability face complex and extensive barriers to economic inclusion. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 2022 *People with Disability in Australia* report revealed that:

- 48% of working-age people with disability are employed (compared to 80% of those without disability)
- 38% of households with a person with disability have a low level of household weekly income, compared to 18% of households without a person with disability
- Working-age people with disability are more than twice as likely to be in financial stress compared to those without disability.¹

Disability representation on the Committee is therefore crucial to ensure that lived experience perspectives are provided in the Committee's work.

Further, Article 4(3) the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) requires the Australian Government to actively involve people with disability in law and policy development and other decision-making processes that affect our rights.² Amending the Bill to require that at least one Committee member is a person with disability will give effect to the Article 4(3) obligation.

If you wish to discuss this letter, please contact my Senior Manager of Policy,

Yours sincerely

Sebastian Zagarella
Chief Executive Officer
People with Disability Australia

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2022) *People with disability in Australia*, AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 31 October 2023.

² Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (New York, 13 December 2006) [2008] UNTS 2515 art 4(3).