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# *Access and inclusion plan 2016-2018*



***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.***

Disability expectations: Investing in a better life, a stronger Australia, PwC, 2011

Workforce participation of Australians with disability is currently 54 per cent, compared to 84 per cent of people without disability. Just under half (45 per cent) of all people with disability are living near or below the poverty line (ABS, 2009).

Not only will improved employment levels of people with disability bring about positive change for individuals, our research shows that almost \$50 billion in GDP could be added to Australia's economy in 2050 if Australia moved into the top eight OECD countries in employment of people with disability. Australia currently ranks 21st out of 29 countries.

This is why, at PwC, we are committed to creating an environment and culture that enables our people with disability and those who care for someone with disability to succeed within PwC. We recognise the role we can play in shifting attitudes and creating equal employment opportunities for people with disability.



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# ***PwC: Creating value through diversity***

## **A message from the CEO**

I'm completely – and boldly – confident of one fact about PwC: to solve important problems we need diverse talent.

Embracing diversity and inclusion is the right thing to do. It also makes good business sense. Diverse talent think differently from one another, and apply varying approaches to problem solving. Diverse talent also help to internationalise our firm at this crucial time for our business and the country.

That's why at PwC we have put diversity and inclusion at the centre of our strategy.

We start from the simple premise that talent is not limited by gender, age, race, nationality, disability or sexual orientation. Our strategy is about encouraging open minds and creating an inclusive culture where people of all walks of life can build a rewarding career and achieve their full potential.



Over recent years, we have implemented a range of policies and programs that have laid the foundations for an inclusive workplace. I am extremely proud of the progress we have made at PwC. However, there is more we want to do. That's why we continue to work towards making PwC an even more inclusive workplace.

I am delighted to present our Access and Inclusion plan which outlines achievements so far and our commitment positive and sustainable change for the employment and retention of people with disability – not just for the better of our business, but for the better of our nation.

***Luke Sayers***

CEO, PwC Australia and Vice Chairman, PwC Asia

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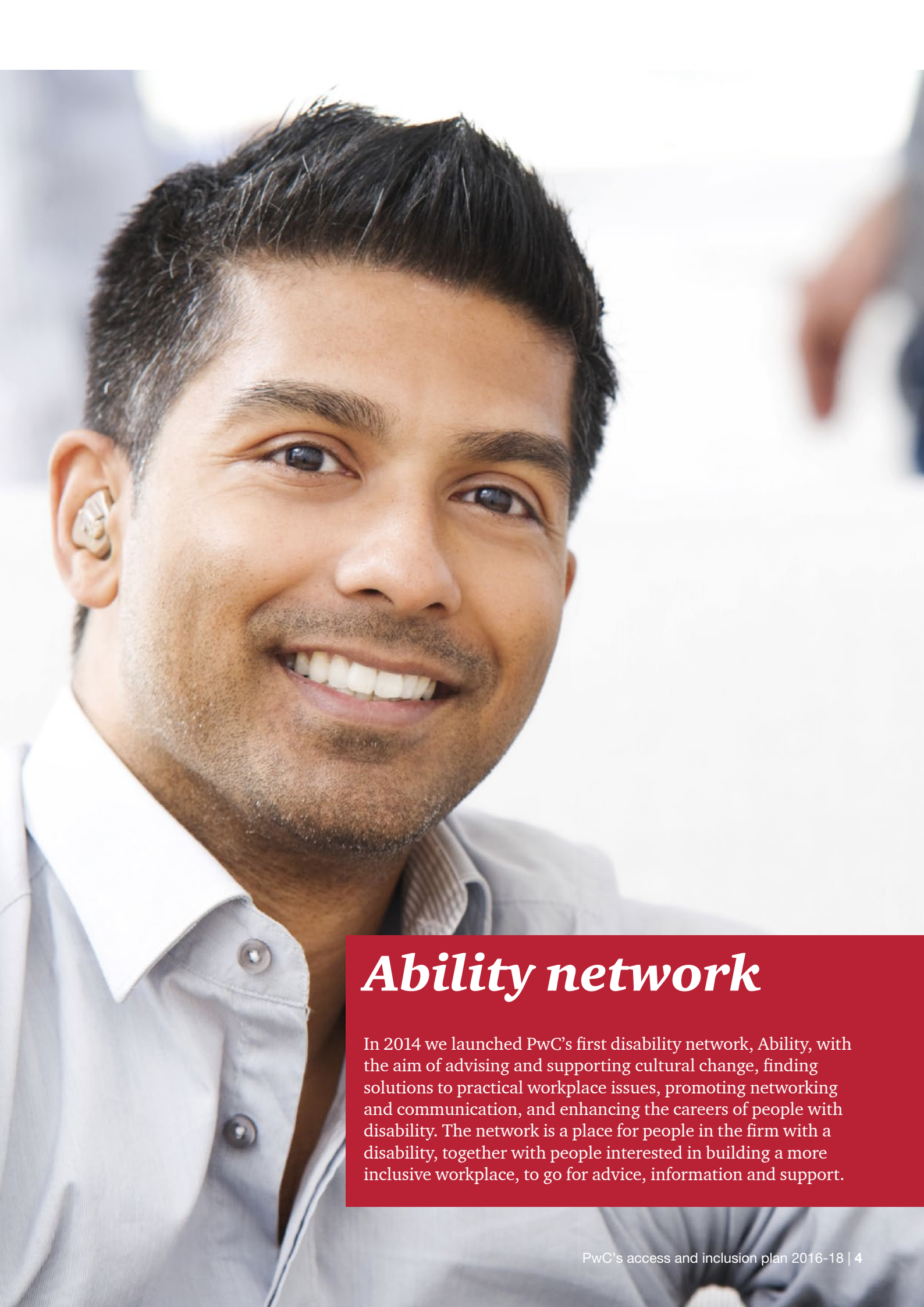
# Achievements to date

*Our Access and Inclusion Plan challenges us to further consider accessibility and inclusion in everything we do.*

Although this is our first Access and Inclusion Plan, it is not the first step we have taken towards inclusion for people with disability within PwC. Progress we have made against our strategic goals to date include:

- Development and Implementation of a Workplace Adjustment Policy and a centralised process for workplace adjustment requests during recruitment and employment.
- Disability Awareness training provided to key staff groups including recruiters, client service staff, and our HR community.
- Partnership with the National Disability Recruitment Coordinator involving a comprehensive recruitment system accessibility review and links with Disability Employment Services.
- Employment of Vacationers through the Australian Network on Disability's Stepping In To program.
- Establishment of our national employee led Ability Network to support people with disability, those who care for someone with disability and drive positive cultural change.
- Occupational Therapy assessment and case management services through our internal Health and Wellness Team.
- Mental Health support through our CARE (Coaching, Advice, Resilience and Empowerment) program available to all staff and their immediate families.
- Proactive mental health strategy including workshops, workplace support and a network of mental health first aid officers.





## *Ability network*

In 2014 we launched PwC's first disability network, Ability, with the aim of advising and supporting cultural change, finding solutions to practical workplace issues, promoting networking and communication, and enhancing the careers of people with disability. The network is a place for people in the firm with a disability, together with people interested in building a more inclusive workplace, to go for advice, information and support.

## *A Message from the Ability Network Lead, Peter Quigley, Director, Risk Assurance:*

“ I have had a ‘covert stammer’ all of my adult life. Covert means that I have learned to avoid words or sounds which I know I will stammer on, instead replacing them with others. This technique has essentially allowed me to manage my disability within professional services.



I have been with the firm for 11 years, five in the UK and six in Australia. During this time I have never sought to hide my disability but I also never went out of my way to disclose unless I felt I absolutely had to. It was only when I was admitted to the Leadership Talent Pool and heard from, and believed, the firm’s commitment to create a truly inclusive environment – a commitment that is being driven from the top – that I put my hand up to help.

Following that experience, I asked Human Capital for some stats around the number of people working with disability within the firm and quickly realised that there was very little known or measured in this space. Whilst I have been fortunate to have supportive managers for many years, my fear is for those who do not. Not because those partners or managers don’t care, but rather they have had nowhere to turn to for help and support.

This then lead to the creation of the Ability Network. A grass roots employee network designed to raise awareness that there are many successful people working within the firm who either have a disability or disabilities, or care for someone who does. Our goal is to change the culture of the firm from within by showcasing and supporting people’s ability, not their disability.



# *Access and inclusion plan* 2016-2018

## *Inspiring leadership*

### **Aspiration:**

Our people are empowered to step up as leaders and to be accountable.

### **Action:**

- Develop leaders through training as access and inclusion champions to promote awareness and role-model inclusive behaviour.
- Create a safe environment for passionate partners and staff to raise awareness through sharing of personal stories.
- Develop a mental health support structure.
- Acknowledge partner and staff contribution to our disability strategy and disability network initiatives and goals as part of the performance review process.



## *Employment and culture*

### **Aspiration:**

To disrupt the status quo and facilitate movement towards a safe and inclusive culture.

### **Action:**

- Implement the RecruitAbility Program, tailored to PwC.
- Grow internship and graduate opportunities at PwC for students with disability.
- Further develop relationships with specialist recruiters to increase our employment of people with disability.
- Grow the current Ability Network with representation across all sites nationally to create awareness and agitate for cultural change.
- Promote PwC's all roles flex policy and flexible work practices to care for the needs of employees with disabilities and carers. At PwC we are open to discussing and implementing a flexible approach to all roles across the firm.
- Feature people with disability consistently in internal and external firm communications.
- Embed disability awareness and confidence education into learning and development programs.
- Increase participation in preventative wellness initiatives to support the physical and mental health of our people.



## *Accessible and inclusive workplace*

### **Aspiration:**

To dismantle the environmental barriers to successful careers.

### **Action:**

- Create premises that are inclusive and provide a dignified user experience for partners, employees, clients, and visitors with disability.
- Ensure all events are inclusive and accessible (internal and external).
- Incorporate accessibility and inclusion as considerations in procurement practices.
- Raise awareness of PwC's Workplace Adjustments policy and process to provide a more flexible and individualised approach to workplace accessibility.
- Centralise the budget for Workplace Adjustments.
- Develop 'disability confident' partners and managers who are aware of how to effectively manage workplace adjustments and support someone with disability.





## *Accessible technology and information*

### **Aspiration:**

To dismantle the technological barriers to successful careers.

### **Action:**

- Remove barriers in the mainstream recruitment processes.
- Increase accessibility of both internal and external websites.
- Streamline procedures for employees to request an IT adjustment.
- Improve accessibility to technology systems.
- Ensure all events have accessible technology where applicable.
- Develop all future e-learn modules to be accessible.
- Create accessible visual and audio materials through captioning, visual and audio descriptions.
- Ensure all information, publications and media can be provided in alternate accessible formats.



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# ***Personal stories***

## **Success at PwC**



### ***Rachael McMaster***

**Senior Accountant  
Risk Assurance  
Canberra**

I commenced working as a graduate accountant within the Financial Assurance division at PwC Sydney. I am a T4 paraplegic and require a manual wheelchair for mobility. Working full time in a client facing role as a person with a physical disability is not without its challenges – travelling to client sites involves planning around the access of the client site, ensuring parking, accessible bathrooms and appropriate elevator access. PwC and my colleagues have always been supportive and flexible with these requirements, and always supported my accessibility requirements 100%, including adjusting doorways, desks and providing financial support for carers to travel with me when flying to other capital cities.

I have been fortunate enough to have the opportunity to move offices from Sydney to Canberra, PwC have given me the confidence in my ability and knowing I have the support of the firm enables me to perform to my full potential.

I have never let my disability define my career, although I do believe it is important to understand my limitations. My colleagues are all very supportive and the flexibility in my job allows me to attend specialist doctors' appointments without any negative implications at work. I have only been able to manage the pressures of full time employment through the flexibility and support of the firm and my colleagues. The ability to contribute to the community and being financially self-sufficient is highly rewarding.



## ***Nic Girard***

**Senior Manager  
Human Capital Development  
Sydney**

My partner in life, Glenn, is a dad, business owner, and a supportive and loving partner. Glenn also has bipolar 2, generalised anxiety disorder and a couple of other labels. What it means for our family is that most of the time we have a loving, fun, hardworking and involved partner and dad and sometimes that changes. We continue to learn as a family when things for us are beyond “normal”. The loving, fun, hardworking and involved partner becomes at best detached and frustrated and at worst vacant, empty, devoid of any feeling or emotion and in bed for days at a time.

I have learnt that I am best for my partner and my family (and me!) if I remain a caring partner as opposed to a carer. We have good professional help to do the caring (doctor, psychologist and psychiatrist). We have learnt as a family to carry on doing the things we have planned, including the fun stuff. We know Glenn will come back to us at some point. I have learnt to always have a back-up plan. I have learnt to be prepared to go to events solo and be happy with that. I have learnt that being open about our situation with friends, family and work makes life a whole lot easier.

The opportunity to work flexibility (including a nine day fortnight, working from home, adjusting hours when needed) means that when things go beyond ‘normal’ I can take care of my family and take care of work. Being open about our situation and treating it as part of our “normal” has meant that I have had the privilege of being able to have conversations with others about their own stories, triumphs and struggles dealing with mental health issues at work and at home. Mental Health continues to carry some stigma and as individuals we can make a difference by sharing our stories of how life, work and mental illness can all work together and be ‘normal’.





## ***Will Turner***

**Communications Specialist  
IT  
Sydney**

When I started at PwC I decided not to disclose that I have bipolar disorder. Like many people with a disability or caring responsibility, I sit on the 'borderline of disclosure'. It didn't take me long, however, to feel comfortable sharing my condition with others. I think this says a lot for the culture of the firm and the direction it is heading.

I'm passionate about accessibility and inclusion because I have experienced firsthand the difference it can make in people's lives in contexts outside of the corporate environment, and want to see these same benefits realised within PwC.

We are aware that there is plenty of work to do, but I am confident that initiatives such as our fledgling (dis)Ability network are only the beginning of something that will be a legacy for generations to come. A sign of our success will be when those who were once on the borderline of disclosure don't even give it a second thought because of their confidence in being understood.



## ***Hayley Bellamy***

**Consultant  
Corporate Affairs  
Sydney**

My involvement at PwC has been such a satisfying and rewarding experience. Thanks to PwC CEO Luke Sayers seeing my potential to be an asset to the firm, I have excelled in so many ways. I have been employed at PwC since early 2013 starting with the PwC Online Team. From there I moved to the Corporate Affairs Team where I have remained ever since.

This opportunity saw many new doors open for me to new and exciting prospects allowing me financial independence and to build a professional profile in an extremely positive environment. My two Undergraduate Degrees in Psychology and Design really paid off giving me the skills to enhance my position within the team.

My future dreams depend on my ability to keep challenging my skills, embrace new opportunities and continue to grow professionally in a stimulating business environment. My ambitions are always to enjoy my lifestyle and work environment, remain financially independent, purchase my own unit and travel to the USA.

Being physically limited and wheelchair bound has produced certain obstacles in my day to day life. However, PwC has been able to look past these restraints to envision my potential while supporting these limitations in my workplace environment, allowing me to be an active employee. I will be forever grateful.

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