

13<sup>th</sup> of November, 2016

## Statement concerning People with Disability

*On the eve of International Day of People with Disability, December 3, the Faith Communities Council of Victoria has issued the following statement:*

As representatives of many religious traditions and different faiths, we stand together in affirming that all people have gifts and contributions that enliven and strengthen the community to which they belong and seek to ensure that people with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate in the faith community of their choice.

The Council recognises the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities* (2006) which states discrimination should not occur on the basis of religion amongst other factors. Furthermore, the Australian *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate against people on the basis of disability.

For people with disabilities, and their families and carers, participation and belonging have at times been problematic because of a range of architectural, cultural and theological factors. People with disabilities request the following from faith communities:

- (i) their physical and sensory needs are addressed in order to be present at times of worship and social activity
- (ii) they experience a sense of unconditional welcome and belonging and are not treated differently on account of disability and
- (iii) they be consulted as to their particular participation in the life of their faith community.

Across the state, the Faith Communities Council of Victoria shares the call that faith communities and faith leaders play their part in ensuring that people marginalised by disability experience a sense of welcome and social inclusion, based on the principles of justice, equality and love.

*Faith Communities Council of Victoria (FCCV) is comprised of the following peak bodies: Baha'i Community of Victoria, Brahma Kumaris Australia, Buddhist Council of Victoria, Hindu Council of Australia (Vic), Islamic Council of Victoria, Jewish Community Council of Victoria, Sikh Interfaith Council of Victoria and Victorian Council of Churches.*

*Promoting a Harmonious Multifaith Victoria*

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