Helen Chenery: Hope you all enjoyed the breakfast. 7:30 precisely and I'm now very pleased to welcome our online attendees. And I'm looking straight down the barrel of the lens. Um, good morning, online attendees. My name is Helen Chenery and I'm your MC this morning. And for our online attendees, I acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land from which you are joining us this morning and elders past, present, and emerging. And online attendees, if you need any technical assistance during the webcast, just comment in the chat box and wise people will attend to you.

Um, I'd like to acknowledge the presence of many people in leadership positions from the Queensland government, um, here this morning, including the Honorable Yvette D'Ath, Member for Redcliffe, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Leader of the House, Linda Colley, Special Commissioner Equity and Diversity, Public Service Commission, and Barbara Phillips, Director, Deputy General, Corporate Service Division, and COVID-19 Supply Chain Surety Division, and Executive Sponsor of the Queensland Health Women's and LGBTIQ+ networks. Barbara will be introducing the minister shortly before providing our official welcome.

Our keynote address, um, this morning is being delivered by Carly Finlay, um, and that will follow. Carly is an award-winning writer, speaker, and appearance activist, who challenges people's thinking about what it's like to have a visibly different appearance. Following her keynote presentation, Carly will be joined by Leith Mitchell, Director of Inclusion and Diversity at the Department of Education in a panel discussion, which I'll moderate, on how to #breakthebias. You'll have an opportunity to ask questions and I urge you to think about that and do so.

Moving on, from my admission, um, earlier this morning, um, I did, I'll just mention to the online audience that I recalled a, a, um, a very embarrassing, um, piece of unconscious bias. And because I'm from higher education, it was about the university sector. And unconscious and sometimes conscious by plays into our employment and advancement practices in our workplace. Wow, that's stating a truism, isn't it?

For example, in the STEM disciplines, that's the science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine in universities, and using the most recent available data, entry level academics, so that's a lecturer level, were roughly even in terms of gender. Male, um, percentage at 40% and female at 60%, but you go up that scale through lecturer, associate professor, and professor, and the statistics are wildly different. At associate professor and professor levels, men held 70% of positions and women 30%, and that's combining associate professor and professor. At professor level, it's higher than 80%, um, of those positions held by men.

Now, how can that be? That's not a reflection of ability or commitment or a desire to advance. So, as I mentioned before, we really need to call out this unconscious deep seated bias and call out the conscious bias too, by the way, 'cause that's everywhere as well. And we need to do it better and more frequently across our workplaces, where gender or indeed any inequality exists.

And today is a great day worldwide because we and millions of others have the opportunity to celebrate women's achievements, to raise awareness about bias, and to take action for equality. So just imagine a world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination of any form. A world where difference and diversity are value; that's equitable and inclusive and agenda equal world.

We're on the path to breaking the bias in our communities, our workplaces, in our schools, colleges and universities, but knowing that bias exists just isn't enough at the moment. We need the right language and we need action, and we need to know how to implement in the workplace and elsewhere to really make progress in leveling the playing field.

And that's what today's about; to give you strategies and ideas to take back into your workplaces and your social environments. And that, that you'll be inspired to, to speak out, to take action, and to break and biases and discrimination, to create what we all want and strive for a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive society.

So, now, onto the event, it's with great pleasure that I ask our executive sponsor Barbara Phillips to introduce our first speaker. Thanks Barbara.

Barbara Phillips: Good morning, everyone. It's a very long walk along that walk. It was meant to be down that end, but apparently we're all wired for this side. So you're gonna watch us walk all the way down here all morning. So [inaudible 00:05:43]. Uh, my name is Barbara Phillips and I am extremely thrilled to see you all here this morning, um, but, more importantly, um, I'd like to begin the day by acknowledging the Turrbal and Jagera people, traditional owners, and custodians of the land on

which we meet and record this event, and pay my respects to elders past, present, and emerging. I extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples joining us today.

On each occasion we host these events, we've been fortunate to have a very high caliber of speakers that join us and today is no exception. It brings me great pleasure to introduce our next speaker who was able to join us for this event today. Please join me in welcoming the Honorable Yvette D'Ath, Member for Redcliff, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, and Leader of the House. Thank you.

Hon. Yvette D'Ath MP: Good morning, everybody. Barb just whispered it's a long way up. I need to get my steps up. I haven't exercised for a while, Barb, so it's all good. Um, morning everybody. Can I start by acknowledging our traditional owners, our first nations people, and pay my respects to Turrbal and to the Jagera people, and, uh, the lands in which we hold this event. And for those who are online, uh, the lands in which you are on today and recognise at this important time on International Women's Day, that when we talk about equality, when we talk about discrimination, uh, there is no greater example of that than our first nations people and what they have endured over many, many decades. Uh, and I want to particularly acknowledge our first nations women and girls who continue today to deal with that trauma that they have experienced over so many years and that we must learn from our past to be able to go forward and improve our future for our first nations people, but for our whole society.

So can I please acknowledge our elders past, present, and emerging and all Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander are people who are joining us here today. I won't go through all of the acknowledgements, so our, uh, wonderful MC, uh, have, has already done that. But, uh, can I just, um, briefly acknowledge our, uh, MC today professor Helen Chenery and our guest speakers, Carly Finlay, and also Leith Mitchell. I'm really looking forward to listening to this panel today. I was going to be one of the speakers a little while ago and COVID got in the way, again.

Uh, and so it is such a pleasure to be able to briefly speak to you all today on this very important International Women's Day. It's been a tough two years, uh, dealing with COVID. Uh, as a society, as a nation, uh, globally, there's been so much heartache, so much pain from this virus. Uh, whether it's loss of life or it's families being separated, it has just been businesses, of course, being decimated because of this virus. It's been such an awful two years. Of course, just before that was the fires and now we're dealing with the floods. It just goes on and on.

And if there's anything to be learned from this is how resilient we are as people; that we get up each day and we get on with life and we do what we've gotta do. And so coming here today, I thought, how do I address a

room full of inspirational leaders, achievers in yourself? Why do I think you're all achievers? Because you're here. You participate in these Queensland Government Series. It's such an amazing opportunity to have this rolling series of events and guest speakers so we can all learn from each other and we can all share ideas, we can network. Uh, something that women don't do as well as men, can I say, we need to network better.

Uh, we are so good at just getting on with the job and doing everything we've gotta do and thinking, how are we gonna do it tomorrow, uh, that we don't stop to go, how can I improve myself? How can I get to where I want to go? Recently, someone said to me, "Well, um, married women have shorter lifespans than men." Now, I'm not suggesting you change your marital status because of that. Um, but it's because we put others before ourselves. And often, when we are in long marriages, we tend to put other people before ourselves. So we don't look after ourselves. And we have to look after ourselves. We have to look after our physical and our mental wellbeing.

The theme this year around International Women's Day: Breaking down biases and discrimination. As Helen said, a world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination, how good would that be? This isn't just about gender and women. This is about inclusion and diversity. I love that we have brought those terms in more. We're not just talking equality anymore. We're talking about inclusion and diversity 'cause it's so much more than just women's rights. It's inclusion and diversity around culture and cultural awareness, around disabilities, around gender in the broader term; our LGBTIQ community.

So we have to have these conversations. Women are just part of that conversation, an extremely important part of that conversation. And I wanna acknowledge the amazing work of Grace Tame and Brittany Higgins for their bravery of speaking up, uh, because I, I was... on the way here, I was googling just when all that happened 'cause the last 12 months has been such a blur. And I was googling and the article came up about myself coming, um, coming out and talking about my life experiences in March last year and just what I experienced as a, as a young girl and a teenager in different settings, uh, and the sort of sexual harassment.

Uh, and, uh, the trolls that were on social media after I did that saying, "Oh, they must have been desperate if they wanted to touch you." Or, you know, "Why are you talking about something that happened so long ago?" Uh, and so I said, "Well, okay, if you something more recent, I can tell you about being groped by an international judge as attorney general in parliament house only two years ago. So if you need something current, there it is."

Uh, but the fact that we had never talked about it. I had never talked about it. The things I had experienced as a young girl, I'd never told another soul until March last year. And why March last year? Because I stood there at that March in Brisbane and saw all these women with their signs, talking about how they were raped or sexually harassed in the workplace, and that they've had enough. And I thought, well, if someone like me in my position is not willing to speak about my history, what's happened to me, which is so minor in comparison to so many awful things that have happened to women in the workplace, then how do we expect a young lady in government or in the private sector who's experienced any thing, any of these things now to speak up? Why would they be brave enough to do that?

So we have to do it and I did. And the ripple effect across the parliament of other women speaking up and all of my colleagues talking about their experiences. So we have to give a voice to what we are experiencing.

The other thing I wanted briefly talk about this morning is believing in yourself. So we talk about changing attitudes and biases. We have to start with ourselves because we are so good at women, uh, as women with, uh, guilt. We do that so well. Mother guilt, you know, you love your job, you love your career, but am I being a good mom? I'm away all the time. How do I juggle it all? There is just this guilt we hang, have with us, but also this imposter syndrome.

And can I say to all the women in the room who think that they're not good enough or they're second guessing whether they can go for that job or that career move or go off to study, you are only limited by your own beliefs in yourself. I have for many years talked about I am only where I am because of other, other people believed in me. And I've finally got to a point in believing in myself. I don't feel like an imposter anymore, but it has taken 50 years to get to that point. And that's ridiculous. Why have I felt not good enough? Why have I always second guessed myself in what I'm doing?

I love what I do. I am where I am 'cause I've worked hard and I earned it. And I'm not going to apologise for it and I'm not gonna keep thinking that I'm not as good as anyone else doing this job. So we have to change the way we think about our jobs. And that's why our initiative around women on boards, I say to women who go, " Oh, I dunno if I've got the skills to put myself forward to the board." What makes you think the other people already sitting on that board were any more qualified than you when they went onto that board. You learn from experience, so don't second guess yourself. Stand up proudly about who you are and what you do, and own it because that's how you will get ahead. And make sure when you do that, you bring others with you.

Because, too often, we see people are so eager to climb that ladder that they make sure they're pulling that ladder out behind them.

A good leader is someone who is not worried about someone taking their job. A good leader is someone who is training others to do their job for them because we are here for a short period of time. We should be grateful for the opportunity we have, but we are all replaceable. So a good leader is one who makes sure that if I'm not here, someone else is gonna be able to do that job. So make sure you're supporting the women around you and make sure we start changing our language. Stop apologising saying, "I can't do that. I've gotta go... I've gotta pick up the kids or I've gotta look after the kids." 'Cause can I say? Many men don't say that. They just say, "No, that doesn't work for me."

I always laugh at the idea that, um, women say, "I've gotta look after my kids. I can, I can't do that. I can't do that evening meeting or the weekend." Men say, "I've got to babysit." When did looking after your own kids become babysitting? I've gotta ask that. It's not babysitting when it's your own children, just saying. You know, it is... we'll have two equality in the workplace and in the home when we have equality in caring. When men are taking six and 12 months off to raise the baby just as women do.

And can I say this might sound very strange to the women in the room? We are so far advanced in that regard than men because men are still feeling insecure to have that conversation with the employer. They are worried about their careers, that if they say I want to take six or 12 months off to help raise my young child, that that's going to impact on their career. They are where we were years ago. And we have to remember that because we have to support men to make those decisions to want to stay home and look after their children just as much as women do.

So that's a lot of crammed info five minutes and I'll probably time up. I'm getting the nod. Uh, but can I say, it's an absolute pleasure to be here today. I'm really looking forward to listening to this panel. I feel so privileged to be part of a government, uh, that respects women, um, who has promoted women, who recognises the importance of our having women on boards and women in senior leadership, uh, but also who is, um, who is focused on that broader inclusion and diversity.

Uh, the initiatives we are bringing in, in health around first nations that we've entrenched that in legislation, we're the only jurisdiction to do that, to recognise that we need cultural awareness and we need to look at our first nations people in the health system. Not about the healthcare they get, it's about actually having them employed in our system, caring for other first nations people at all levels. Um, that's the sort of thing we need to talk about with diversity and inclusion.

So thank you for everything that you do to make a difference across our government agencies. Uh, keep believing, uh, keep inspiring, uh, and keep believing in yourself. Uh, and we will make a difference because more diversity and more inclusion in our society, in our boardrooms, at all levels of government, at all decision making levels, makes for better decisions and a better society for everyone. Thank you.

Barbara Phillips...: Thank you. Thank you, Minister. And Minister, can I just thank you, um, for the leadership you show every day and also for the openness and encouragement that you actually bring to diversity and inclusion. And to all of those people around you, we are very grateful. Thank you for that. And thank you, everyone, who is here today. Thank you to those that have come to us and coming to us online. Um, it's the first time we've been able to host a breakfast series since March, 2021. So I'd have to say to you, it's, it's a bit daunting just to look out at 150 and, thankfully, all smiling faces out there, but I'd have to tell you when we did the big series and we had the 1500 people, it, it just seems like such a lifetime ago. But this is so much better. This is so much nicer to see you all here. It's lovely to see you. So thank you for coming and bringing us all your effort today.

Um, it's really lovely to also see the great number of people that we've got across from the public service and sector that has come together. This is a whole of government event. We try and bring our colleagues in from other government agencies as well so we all have opportunities for networking and getting a chance to see and talk with other folk. And we do it over coffee and breakfast because actually that's a really nice way of having that interaction and being able to share and have people break down some of the things that can be a little uncomfortable for people. So we are very keen that we can continue to do this.

I believe that you will have a great morning today. I think that today is the beginning of a new refreshed series and we've deliberately said that because what we are hoping in our intent is that this series will enliven discussion, widen opportunities, and most importantly drive action. Because we can all come and we can network and we can talk, and it's lovely and it's lovely to see you all, but until we go back and we make change and we're actually happy to own it and make it stick in our workplaces, then we will not see the change that we deserve to see.

So I hope that today, as we come together to recognise International Women's Day, which is a global day, celebrating social and economic, cultural and political achievements of women, gender parity can only be achieved through collective action and shared ownership. And by joining today's event, you can help be part of that solution.

This morning, we will hear from three brilliant women. I've had the pleasure of sitting at the breakfast table with them, Carly, Leith, and

Helen, who are all transforming the inclusion landscape. Thank you for being part of today's conversation as we talk about how we can break down biases and discrimination to create a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive workforce.

We paused the Queensland Health Breakfast series out of necessity so that everyone could focus on the emergent issues that the pandemic has presented over the last couple of years. While challenging in many ways, the pandemic enabled us to identify new ways of working and to give us a platform to apply innovation, flexibility, and creativity into our everyday work practices. We now have a great opportunity to take what we have learnt during this time and use it to reshape and change inclusivity and accessibility of our workplaces. Your feedback from this event will be incredibly valuable in doing this.

As the Executive Sponsor of both Queensland Health Women's and LGBTIQ+ networks, I am committed to creating a workplace that values and draws upon the contributions of all our people, using their diverse backgrounds and life experiences. And what a wonderful future we could create if no matter who you are or what you need, you could bring your true, authentic self to work and feel completely supported.

We can't build diverse teams without pairing diversity with inclusion, nor can you consider you have one if you now have a diverse team because equity and inclusion together is where the real, real work begins. My goal for today is that our wonderful speakers can help provide you with tangible actions that you can implement back in your own workplaces so that when people come to work, they can feel safe to their authentic self, have their voices heard, and they belong, inclusive workplaces are not just built with words but also with action.

Again, I'd like to thank you for all joining us today, both in person and online. It's great to be back hosting events like this, that can drive real change. Thank you to the wonderful team that we've had that led us here today. From Amy and Tiffany, thank you, and to the many volunteers that make events like this possible.

Can I encourage you all, to be kind to yourselves and to each other, and stay safe, and enjoy the morning. Thank you.

Audience: (Applause)

(Music)

Helen Chenery: Well, thank you minister, and thank you, Barbara.

Now, how do you follow those two impressive women? Well, you meet our next speaker, our guest speaker this morning, Carly. And it gives me great pleasure to now introduce her.

Carly Findlay is an award-winning writer, speaker and appearance activist. She identifies as a proud disabled woman, living with a rare severe skin dis-, condition, Ichthyosis. She organised Australia's first Ichthyosis meeting in 2015. Around 75 people attended, and around 20 of those were affected by Ichthyosis.

Her first book, a memoir called "Say Hello", was released in January 2019. She writes on disability and diversity issues for news outlets, including the ABC, The Age, The Sydney Morning Herald, and SBS.

In 2020, Carly received a medal of the order of Australia, for her work as a disability advocate and activist. And she was named one of Australia's most influential women in the 2014 Australian Financial Review and Westpac 100 Women of Influence Awards. Wow. Are we in for a treat today. Uh, please welcome Carly to the stage.

Audience: (Applause)

(Music)

Carly Findlay: Hello. Helen's just getting me a stool. Thank you.

(Music)

Thanks very much. Excellent. Thank you. I can't stand for 30 minutes, so ...

Um, thank you so much for having me today, um here in Meanjin. I live in Werundjeri country, in Melbourne. I'd like to pay my respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly elders, past and present, and I thank them for taking care of this land, air, and waterways since the beginning of time.

As a writer who's a guest on Aboriginal land, I give thanks to First Nations people who have been telling stories and making art for, you know, 60,000 years. I always like to give a shout out to Aboriginal writers, and today being International Women’s Day, I recommend that you read books by Aboriginal woman, women, including Karen Wild, Anita Heist, Gail Kennedy, and Tara June Winch. Go and buy or borrow those books from bookshops and libraries, and support Aboriginal women writers.

For those of you in the room and on the online broadcast, who might be blind or have low vision, I'll describe myself. I'm a woman with a red

face and short, dark curly hair. I'm wearing a colorful dress, a brooch that is a depiction of Grace Tame giving Scott Morrison the side eye.

Audience: (Laughs)

Carly Findlay: I'm also wearing coloured stockings and shoes, and I'm sitting on a stage, on a stool. And behind me is, or next to me are chairs. And there's some power point screens to the side of me.

Um, image descriptions, as I've just done, are an easy and free way that you can create accessibility for your colleagues, your audiences, your customers and clients. You can do this in real life and online. Give it a go. Describe yourself. When you do events, or when you post on social media.

I also want to acknowledge the devastating floods that Queensland and northern New South Wales residents have experienced in the last week or so. I can't fathom the loss, the grief, the fear, that so many have endured. And I'll be donating some of my speaker's fees to grassroots organisations to help people in need, after today.

And also, to the Queensland Government, especially Queensland health, you've done such an amazing job in managing the pandemic and the natural disasters in the last two years. And you're amazing and you deserve a holiday. I was just talking with Yvette before, and she needs a long weekend desperately (Laughs).

Audience: (Laughs)

Carly Findlay: So thank you. Today's International Women's Day and the theme is "Break the bias". I'm talking about disability. I identify as a disabled woman, and as always, this is my own perspective, and I don't speak for all disabled people.

We, as disabled people make up 18 percent of the population, maybe more, because people don't identify as disabled. They might not be, um, diagnosed. They might not want to disclose. So someone that you know, someone that you work with, someone you work for, someone who's serving you at the supermarket, you know, your hairdresser, um, the, the people who care for your children. They probably make up disabled people, so you know, you will know a disabled person. Perhaps you are a disabled person.

It's really important not to forget disabled women in your feminist movements. And I was really glad to hear that Queensland Health has not only a focus on gender, but diversity as a whole. And that was really great to hear. Um, American disability activist Amani Barbara, who is also a black women, she tweeted a few years ago, "If you're

intersectionality forgets disabled people, I don't want it". So it's really important that you include disabled people in everything that you do.

And there's conscious and unconscious bias, as mentioned before. And from my experiences, unconscious bias is the hardest hitting. It can be really hard to prove. It's not overt, but those of us who regularly endure it, we can spot it. We know what it looks like, we know how it feels.

I've endured unconscious bias all my life. I can't help but disclose my disability, every time I enter a room or pass someone in a street. People think I'm sunburned, burnt in an accident, contagious, scary, a joke, a villain. I'm also a white passing woman of color. My Mum is South African. She's black South African, and my Dad is white English. And I've had people say that I'm faking my race, which is bizarre. And also that I'm not actually disabled enough, because it's just a skin condition.

Um, these comments actually have come from within the disability community, and they've hurt the most. It's been really hard, but also, for many disabled people who have a disability who's not as visible, there is that privilege of passing, but it can be very hard for disabled people who have a, a hidden disability who ... Um, because they're often disbelieved, they're expected to conform to non-disabled standards. So, people think, well, you know, you don't need a seat on the train because you look "normal", quote unquote.

So while my disability is visible, there are aspects of it that aren't visible as well. So for example, my face is the reddest, but it's probably the less painful of my body. Um, and it is usually my legs that you can't often see, because I have them covered most days, or every day, that are in the most pain. I'm in a lot of pain today, actually. Um, so it's good to have seat here. But you wouldn't know that, because my face is the reddest part of my, the reddest part of my body, and the thing that you see.

Um, disability looks different for everyone, for all disabled people. And our experiences vary. Even with those of us who have the same diagnoses. And that's why it's really important to hear from lots of non-disabled ... Sorry. It's important for non-disabled people to hear from a variety of disabled people. Um, to gain our collective perspectives.

So, I want to talk anybody some examples of unconscious bias that I've experienced. Um, some bias that happened to me at home on the weekend, and while it was discriminatory and upsetting, I was actually really pleased that I had some content for this speech, because of it.

Audience: (Laughs)

Carly Findlay: I moved house recently, and it's been quite, uh, physically and emotionally exhausting. Actually had to move house because of a man ... I didn't add this to my speech, but I'll tell you now. I bought a new car recently, in November, and the tree that I used to park my old car under ... My old car was very old ... would shed leaves, and it would just get dirty. My white car would get dirty. So when I got this new car, I thought "Okay, I'm going to park it in this unused spot." The tenant in that apartment had been in Brisbane for work, because of COVID, and his flatmate did not have car, does not drive, don't even see him to ask if I could use his spot. The spot had been vacant for like nine months.

Anyway, four days after I'd parked my car, under, under, in that spot, away from that tree, at night, this man came out, uh, in the middle of the night and started yelling, and threatened to kill me, and damaged my car. And so, the people across the road got security footage and when he had heard what had happened ... I just thought it was someone from the train station, because we lived right, close to the train station. I thought it was train traffic.

And so, I went to the police. My husband was saying, "Oh you know, maybe I'll just talk to him". I said, "I don't think that would be a good idea." I'm just going to the police and so the police said to me, "Go and get a personal safety order out against this man. He sounds dangerous." He, the threats were horrendous. And so I did. I got a personal safety order out against this man. And there was a police investigation, and while he admitted to threatening to kill me, he did not admit to damaging my car.

And so, we moved house. And we also moved house, because the other man, that lives in a different apartment in the block, colluded with the man who damaged my car, allegedly. And so I was seen as the overreacting woman. I was seen, you know, he told me, "Don't you go to court. This won't end well for you." It was quite awful. And so we moved house.

Anyway. Um, so it's cost me a lot. And I really wanted to say loudly, imagine being the person who causes you to move house? But I didn't, because the restraining order prevents me from talking to him.

Audience: (Laughs)

Carly Findlay: Um, anyway, we've moved now, which is good, I guess. Although I've done nothing at the new house. I've just got this pile of stuff in the, in the entrance, because it's taken such a long time.

So um, I've lived at my old place for 17 years, which is a long time. And I've got a lot of stuff, mostly clothes, as you can imagine, um ... In my house, I had a floordrobe situation.

Audience: (Laughs)

Carly Findlay: And in the middle to night, my floordrobe, which is really just a pile of my clothes at the end of my bed, actually fell on me. And I thought that my husband was, had his legs on me in bed. And I'm like, "Stop it!" And he said, "No it's your clothes that have fal-, have fallen on you".

Audience: (Laughs)

Carly Findlay: Anyway. There's not ... yeah, there won't be a floordrobe in the new house, apparently. (Laughs)

So, moved house, and I have a lot of stuff, and also, I have Ichthyosis, uh, which is this rare condition that makes me shed skin more than the average person. I shed 28 days worth of skin in one day.

So, um, it's also what keeps you looking young. My rapid skin renewal. And on Sunday, we had our end of lease clean booked. It was a big job. Um, but when I booked it, they only asked me how many rooms I had, which I told them. And I also shouldn't have to disclose that I have a skin condition.

Um, so the cleaners came, they saw me, they saw the skin on the floor. And they went out, they went back to the car and they said, "This will be a big job." And then they left. My husband and my, my friend Mitch were, were there. And um, I don't usually get a man to speak for me, but I did say to Mitch, as my husband was delivering stuff back to our old house. I said, "I think I need you to speak for me, because I don't know if I can handle this."

Um, so he said, just do what you can. Just do the rooms that you can, it'll be fine, and you know, come back on Monday if needed. But they just left. I knew that they were put off by my skin. Like, I've experienced this so much. I've experienced it from cleaners, I've experienced it from taxi drivers, particularly people in service roles, who are just so shocked.

And this discrimination is really hard to prove. But I can see it in people's faces. I can see their fear. I can see the shock. And I can ... You know, and then they refuse to carry out the service. And the emotional toll of this is exhausting. And Adam and Mitch ... Adam, my husband, and Mitch handled it, handled it really well. They, you know, spoke, and so I didn't have to.

But I also had to follow up on the refund from the company. I had to talk to the real estate agent to say, "I'm really sorry but our end of lease clean, didn't do it." I actually live in Bill Shorten's electorate as well, and so I was that desperate, because this stuff has happened to me so

many times, that I rang Bill's media advisor on the weekend. And I said, "I'm sorry to ask for this, but I need some kind of support from the council to get a cleaner or something." You know, and I wouldn't be asking if I wasn't desperate, but this kind of microaggression, this unconscious bias happens so much.

Um, and it's created a lot of shame, you know, it's a shame that I carry around with me all my life. I'm pretty fine with looking the way I do, and you know, having Ichthyosis. But I'm not fine about how I'm treated because of this sort of, you know, the skin I leave behind and the stigma around that.

And I also had to switch my workdays. Um, I work as, in the arts. I work at an arts festival called Melbourne Fringe. And I was so exhausted on Sunday after this, that I texted my manager and I said, "I don't think I'm coming tomorrow, can I swap my days for Thursday?" And that was fine, but all of the cumulative affect of this is so wearing. And so, there's an example of unconscious bias that I very recently experienced.

I want to talk a bit about the workplace now, and um, I feel like disabled people have to prove that we can work harder and be more reliable than other people, because the perception is that we aren't reliable, that we take a lot of sick days, et cetera. Um, and most disabled people would say that, that they do ... Most, many disabled people can't even get into the workplace during, due to inaccessibility and bias.

I want to mention, briefly, um, when I, I used to work for the government. I used to work for the federal government. Um, and I got a graduate program there. So I was very young when I started. I was 21. And um, I always thought that I could just do an office job. I thought well, it's not outside. It'll be fine. But I didn't realise like, the long days, and the, the stress of learning new jobs and ... You know, working for people and all that. I didn't realise that that would have a big effect on my health when I applied.

And I also assumed that a government employer was more flexible than a non-government employer. And so, I started this new job in payroll. And I'm not very good at maths. Not very good at systems. I'm a writer. And I, I just couldn't pick this up. I hated it. It was awful, it was boring, it was really difficult to work in. And I was like, 23 at the time. And my skin just got worse and worse, because I was in this cycle of not enjoying my job, not being good at it, not being able to pick it up, and you know, there was some bullying happening from other staff as well.

Um, and every time I would go into hospital, they would say, "Well who's going to do your job when you're away?" Like, there was no kind of back filling process or anything, so it was always on me.

And, I asked to go part time. I didn't want to go, I didn't even want to go, you know, three days a week. I literally just wanted a nine day fortnight. And so, they said no. And I said, "It's to manage my health", and they said, "No".

And I said, "Okay, so if I had a baby, could I go part time?" And they said "Yes". And I said, "But I'm 23, I don't have a partner, I don't have a, a plan to have a child at that time". And um, yeah, I realised that they valued women who chose to reproduce over women who chose to take care of our health or disabled women in general. I felt really unworthy, and it was really hard.

I did find a really great place to work in that government organisation, for a number of years, with amazing managers. But it took a long time. Um, and then I did, I ended up quitting that job, and now I do work part time now. And I didn't actually realise, until this part time job in the arts came up, and they gave me the Fair Work Australia statement, that I could request to go to part time, because I'm disabled. But I didn't know that when I was a full time employee in the federal government. So that was really weird.

And also, now I work in the arts, I feel like I can be myself. I, I can be true and um, as Barbara said before, you know, it's really important that we can bring our whole selves to work and that we can be ourselves. And I feel like I can talk about disability. I don't have to leave that part behind.

Um, I also want to mention, um, in the workplace ... The workplace, for me is the media, sometimes. And I did an interview on the radio, four years ago this month, and um, you may have heard it, I spoke to a seasoned radio host on the ABC Melbourne. And I went on to talk about microaggressions, particularly towards disabled people. So microaggressions sort of are, the intrusive and rude comments that marginalised people experience on a daily basis. The unconscious bias stuff.

So I endured some micro aggressions in real time in this interview. So the interview was live. It was a 30 minutes interview. Um, the host described my appearance as being um, akin to a burns victim. But he didn't describe his co hosts' appearance. It was only mine. The cohost was a white woman with beauty privilege, so, not a skin condition. He also said my face wouldn't be good at Halloween, implying that it's scary, like a costume. And he asked me what the most intrusive question that a stranger has ever asked me, to which I said, "Can you have sex?".And then he asked me that. So, "Can you have sex?", on live radio.

So, I sat there and I sort of laughed it off, really nervously, during the interview, and I continued the interview. And afterwards, I you know, shook his hand when, when we still could shake hands. And I smiled and thanked him and I think he thought everything was okay. And I got downstairs, and I'm such a fan girl. Tim Rogers from You Am was downstairs. And so was Julia Zemiro. And I'm like "Ahh!"

Anyway, and I said, "I just had this really weird interview with this radio host" And um, "Is this weird?" And I went back to my workplace. I'd just started at Melbourne Fringe then, and they're like, "How did you go?" And I said "Eh, this is really weird". And they just couldn't believe it. You know, they couldn't believe what happened. And um, I, I didn't check my phone much in the day, but when I got home, um, after work, it was trending on Twitter. People were calling it out, people were saying how ableist it is, was.

So that was really brilliant. I hadn't seen that before. I hadn't seen people defend disabled people like that in the media before. Often, racism and sexism is focused on, but ableism is justified. Like um, when footballers use the "R" word for example. The media talks about how, you know, it's fine. Racism and sexism is off limit, but yep, we can use those words.

So when this happened on the radio, so many people just, you know, supported me, which is amazing. I had messages of support from so many people, really high profile people in the media, which was incredible and heartening. And I wrote about it on my blog, and I, it made the news the next day and I got to do, I did two media. I did The Age interview and also The Project.

Um, and it was also the first time in 21 years that this radio host had publicly apologised. But, I wasn't invited back to the ABC for ten months. I was a regular guest before that. I used to go in every two or three weeks to talk about the arts on different shows ... On a show, rather. And I also used to talk on other shows on the ABC.

Um, every time there was a media about him ... He left, I think, at the start of 2019, or 20 ... At the end of 2019. I can't remember. But every time there was media anybody him, I was mentioned in that media article. I was mentioned in Senate estimates and the former head of the ABC, Michelle Guthrie, said that because that, she and the radio host weren't friends, she didn't step up and support me ... It was so bizarre.

And I was really tired of it. And also, I also heard that my story was used as training for their staff in what not to do. It was very hard, and I felt punished for that. I can say that this month, I'm delivering training to the ABC around media diversity and inclusion, which is great. But it took a long time.

I also got hate mail telling me how difficult I am, and how I should have responded, that I should have walked out. But imagine the outcry if me, a disabled woman of color, had walked out of the interview. I would have been labeled petulant, I would have been labeled a diva. It would've impacted the wider disability community as well, because we're all homogenised, because we're all the same, you know? Like people just see us as the same. And so, my actions would've made people think disabled people are different, and we shouldn't be invited back on the radio.

Um, I don't ever name this radio host. Although, I did a speech one day, oh, probably a year after this happened. And I said, I don't ever name it, and this guy stood up and like, yelled out his name, after I said I don't name him. Um, I don't want to give him that power. And it is only now that I am comfortable to speak about it, because it's taken, you know, four years of that.

Um, because it's not safe for marginalised women to speak up. You see what happened to Yasmin Abdel-Magied. She was driven out of the country for tweeting, lest we forget, um, and the- and the countries that were impacted by war. Um, it costs us too much, if we speak up, I feel. Um, and we're expected to smile and be grateful for the crumbs we're given. You know, I should've just been grateful that I was, uh, a guest on the ABC for free every few months, and got a, you know, a half an hour interview with that host. Um, and that, I- I just think that that's not the way to operate.

Uh, South African writer, um, and friend, Sisonke Msimang, she wrote an incredible piece yesterday in The Guardian. Um, she expressed admiration for both Grace Tame and Brittany Higgins, but she also talked about how, if these two women were black, the public's response to their out- outspokenness would be different. Sisonke said, angry white women herald a new frontier in feminism, while loud, black women are considered rude and uncouth. Sisonke went on to say, our anger is not seen as strategic or tactical or worthy of analysis. Instead, it's radical- uh, sorry, it's racialised, seen to spring from our nature, a central- a centralised trait, part of the insidious racist idea that black people feel, while- while white people think.

That article was excellent. Go and read it. She was very good in- in praising Grace and Brittany, but also questioning why the media has been focused on really only white women. And during that national press cub- press club conference, that- or address, rather, that you might have seen, it was mostly only white women in the audience. Why? Why were there more people- why weren't there more people of colour there?

I want to touch on really briefly, the issues facing disabled women now. Sorry, this is dot points. The lack of vaccinations to people in group homes, and a lack of access to vaccinations in regional areas. A friend of mine, who is, um, disabled, can't get her fourth shot, her booster shot, um, because she lives in regional New South Wales, and it's the discretion of the healthcare system. I had trouble getting my third, actually. I had to- I was d- uh, denied by my GP. And, uh, you know, I'm at great risk- greater risk of COVID than, um, other people, and I got denied. And I actually got denied twice. Um, and that, again, you know, the emotional labor of that is- is huge.

Um, the floods have impacted disabled people, because many disabled women have lost mobility equipment, homes, they can't find accessible accommodation. You might have seen Queenslander Karni Liddell's, um, Facebook post recently, where she was impacted by the floods and all of her paralympic memorabilia was lost. But also, she needs to find accessible housing now, and that's hard to come by.

Um, there is still segregation in special schools and group homes, and people- disabled people work in sheltered workshops, where some, uh, only earn $3 an hour. There's still marriage inequality, where disabled women are either reliant on their partners, and sometimes trapped in bu- abusive relationships, or they're unable to earn an income, uh, you know, for independence, because it will impact their disability support pension.

There's also the impact, uh, sorry, the difficulty of accessing the NDIS, due to enormous paperwork and biases of not being disabled enough. And a recent study showed that people, uh, wo- less women were on the NDIS, and it was because of this not being believed, the- the paperwork, the emotional labor, the needing to care for their family members. All of that. They don't have time to apply, and don't have the, um, stamina to apply and be rejected.

Um, and the sexual assault and murder rate of disabled women is much higher than those of non-disabled women. And at a r-recent disability royal commission hearing, focuses on employed, it was found that the proportion of disabled people in the workplace is much lower than the pe- than that of non-disabled people. 53.4% compared to 84.1%. And Christina Ryan, who founded, um, the disability leadership institute, said that in the workplace it can be a danger for disabled people to disclose their disability, so many people don't disclose. So, and they can't even get in.

And so, it's really important to make workplaces accessible, so people feel comfortable in disclosing. And as I mentioned before, I work at Melbourne Fringe, and we recently conducted job interviews for a role, and the role is a targeted position for a disabled or deaf person. And I

can tell you, that everyone we've interviewed have said, we are so grateful that you've asked about our access needs, because in so many jobs I'm not allowed to talk about disability, or I don't feel comfortable talking because it might penalise me. But by openly saying, do you have access needs? How can we help you do your job to the best of your ability? You make people feel welcome.

Um, I've been asked to talk about what we can take from the last two years, because the pandemic has changed how we work, um, how we see art, how we socialise. And for the first time in, you know, after asking for so many years, we've got the opportunity to work from home. And many disabled people have been asking this for years, because it's easier for us to do that. It's meant that we don't have to work in- in inaccessible physical workplaces. We- we might have the option to work at times that suit us, and also, our travel times have been eliminated, and we aren't exposed to other germs in addition to COVID.

Um, it also meant that we can access art, like live performances and galleries online, and I hear, as an arts worker, that some disabled people have, for the first time, been able to access art as a performer and as an audience member. Some people have never seen a live show, because they can't leave the house, but they've seen stuff online that they would of never have before the pandemic.

Um, but even though we now don't have to wear masks, um, we don't have to check in anymore, um, the pandemic isn't over. It's not just because we're over it. And so there are so many disabled people who are still isolating, as though we're in lockdown, because they're at risk. Um, I just said, at our table earlier, I had six weeks off over Christmas, and I was really resentful, because the numbers, the COVID numbers were going up, and I was just staying home because I didn't want to get COVID, because I didn't feel like- I didn't want to take that risk.

Um, so we must continue the access that we've had during the pandemic, in a post pandemic world. And that is making sure that things are still online, um, that we can still have flexible work options and recorded events, et cetera. Um, because these things have benefited so many.

Um, I'm going to provide you with some tangible advice now about what you can do to be good allies. Um, really listen to our lived experiences, especially if you work in a role that, um, continues to provide disabled pe- provide to disabled people. Um, you know, often we are the experts in our own bodies. Uh, I want- I- I traveled overseas, uh, for the first time. I left it quite late, actually, because I was quite nervous. I didn't know how my skin would go, and also I wasn't very good with money, and so I needed to save up to go overseas.

And I went overseas for the first time 10 years ago. And, um, oh, it was really hard for me to get insurance, because of my skin, because I had a preexisting condition. And the person I was speaking to on the phone, uh, had never heard of Ichthyosis. They didn't even know how to spell it or pronounce it. But then they told me that my premium would be really high, because I have this condition, and that I had- and- and anytime- if I'd get sick from anything, even if it wasn't related to my condition, I'd still have to pay this enormous excess, like $5,000 or something (laughs).

And so, I just couldn't fathom how they couldn't listen to me and my experience, and when they don't know anything about the condition. And I remember asking my then manager, who had been, um, who had recovered from cancer, and she had gone overseas to America, and I said, who did you choose? And she told me, and that was great. I finally found an insurance provider that, you know, catered for me, and I've used them ever since.

And when I went on that trip, my mom came along, and she got, um, a throat infection in New York. And we went to this doctor, and it was really expensive, it was like 500-and-something dollars for her appointment and prescription. And when we went into the consult room (laughs) I could see the doctor's eyes just raise like dollar signs in his eyes, that I'm there. He... mics off. Is the mic off? Okay. Um, and yeah, uh, you know, again, that assumption that I'm going to be the sickest in the room. So that was quite funny. I've never had to draw on my insurance, but- but mom did that time.

Um, I also want to say, don't ask us to hold your hand when we tell us- when we tell you that, you know, your bias or your discrimination makes us uncomfortable. Often when we talk about the experiences of discrimination that we have as marginalised people, those with privilege find it really uncomfortable, and they m-might be stop engaging with us, or stop engaging with the issue in case they get it wrong in the future. Uh, I can't tell you the amount of people I've had like unfollow me on social media because I've said that, you know, they're using ableist language. And instead of like stopping using it, they just stop engaging with disabled people. And that's not the way forward with progress.

Um, I also think that it's important to create physical, online and financial accessibility. So hold your events in accessible ven-venues, like, um, I'm so grateful I'm here, but also, this stage should have a ramp to show that people in wheelchairs could be on this stage, and they could lead, they could speak. Um, you know, include, uh, have- have events at community pricing, where, um, you know, you have a number of prices, uh, sorry, spaces for free or at low cost. Have it at, um, different times. Record your events, so people can see them.

Make sure that, um, you are not just hearing from white disabled people. Make sure you're including, um, culturally and linguistically diverse disabled people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island disabled people. Queer disabled people, trans disabled people, intellectually disabled people. People who communicate differently as well, like through Auslan or assisted communication devices. Um, and also pa- pass the mic to disabled people, enabling us to become leaders, through mentoring, training and payment.

Um, one thing I get asked a lot, is how to talk to kids about disability. Um, and I'm sure that many of you are parents, and I want to impart some tips. Um, it's important that you do the work for us a little bit as well, because being constantly asked about appearance or disability can be really tiring, even if it's in, you know, through curiosity. That curiosity can be really tiring. So talk to your kids about disability at home. Uh, tell them that it's okay to ask questions. Even better if you preface it by saying, hello, and saying, I hope you don't m-mind me asking, but can I ask about your wheelchair, or can I ask, you know, why is your face red? But also, tell your kids that it- it is okay that we don't have to answer every question as well.

Um, read books by disabled authors to your children, um, featuring disabled characters, or- or, you know, real life stories. Own voices are really important. Um, a few books that you can read are, um, Jessica Smith, OAMs Little Miss Jessica Goes to School. Jessica, um, has, um, uh, is an amputee, uh, a congenital amputee. And, um, she's written a book about her younger self going to school. Uh, We Move Together is a book by do- about different ways move. Um, Stars in Our Eyes is a graphic novel by Jessica Walton, it's about a bisexual girl who's leg has been amputated and she develops a crush at a convention.

Um, Asphyxia has written a brilliant young adult book, um, about a deaf girl. It's called Future Girl. I was in a bookshop recently, and an 11 year old was telling the bookshop seller how this is the best book she'd ever read, so go read that one. Um, and also Growing Up Disabled in Australia. I edited that. It features 46 stories by disabled people in Australia. Um, and I'm also going to write a junior version, a picture book of my book, Say Hello, this year.

Um, one of the great things that my friends do, uh, that my friends who have kids do, is show their kids me and other disabled people on social media. And this has helped so much. I'm not saying sign your kids up to a social media account if they're five. I'm not saying that (laughs). I'm saying, that while you're scrolling through your Instagram or Facebook, um, show your kids a diverse range of people. This is really easy to do. Um, and it means kids are prepared.

Um, I have a friend called Hester, and she's got two little girls. And last year I met her then two year old, Isla. I haven't seen Isla since she was about four months old. And so Hester showed Isla photos of me on my Instagram, and they had a discussion about what my favorite ice cream flavor would be based on my photos (laughs). And so when I met Isla, um, we went to the ice cream shop, and she was very excited that she said mango was my favorite flavor, and I said she got that right, yes. And so we had this great conversation about me linking mango ice cream. And there was no fear, there was no hesitation, and, um, it was just such a good thing that she'd been prepared. I was so grateful that Hester introduced her to me like that.

Um, I also encourage, if you are a parent of a disabled child, or a child from another marginalised background, like, um, a gender diverse child or Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander child, um, introduce those children to people like them. It's so important that they see that there's a community and they can see what is possible for them.

Um, my parents didn't, uh... I wasn't- I didn't identify as disabled until I was in my 30- in my late 20s. And, um, but my- and my parents did the best job they could. But also, if I'd known other disabled people and known that we share the same experiences, it would have been so much easier and so much better, that, you know, I would have known what was possible. Um, disability identity isn't all of a person, but it's an important part of our identity, and it shouldn't be dismissed. And showing, you know, seeing other disabled people shows what's possible.

I'm going to mention some women to watch now, for you to follow on social media. Um, and given I'm here in Queensland, it's only fitting that I talk about Queensland disabled women. Um, look up the work of Alicia Mathews. She founded No Permit No Park. So advocates on anti-poverty and anti-violence, and also disability parking. Maddy Little. Maddy is the director of Undercover Artist festival, a festival that's led by and centers disabled artists. Um, Alyce Nelligan. Alyce is the- a member of the Greens party, and she advocates for disabled parents, and also foster care, and she was just named, um, one of the top 100 women of influence in Toowoomba. And Carol Taylor. Carol is a fashion designer and lawyer. She creates accessible, um, and stylish fashion.

I also want to mention, before I wrap up, one book that you should also read, Eliza Hull has, uh, is a musician based in Castlemaine, um, on Dja Dja Wurrung Country and she, uh, released a book called We've Got This, Stories By Disabled Parents. And she edited this book after she had a radio show about that, because she did not see stories from disabled parents. And that is such an important, you know, thing for both non-disabled, particularly in the medical field. E-Eliza said she wants people in the medical field to drop their biases and read this

book and be educated, because she experienced so much medical ableism.

Uh, and to end, I want to say that biases, they hold us back, and they create false narratives about women, about disabled women, about other marginalised women. And so it's important that we think outside of our own experiences, and drop the preconceptions about those who are different to us. Um, so thank you so much for having me today. And happy International Women's Day. And make sure that you take up space today and every day. Thank you.

Helen Chenery: Thank you.

Carly Findlay: That's okay. Do I sit on the chair?

Helen Chenery: Yeah.

Carly Findlay: Okay.

Helen Chenery: Thank you, Carly. Um, I can't possibly sum up what an- an outstanding presentation that was.

Carly Findlay: Thank you.

Helen Chenery: Except to say, I learned a lot, and it's changed my thinking.

Carly Findlay: (laughs).

Helen Chenery: So thank you. Um, what we're going to do now is, uh, r-run into our panel session. And I'd like to welcome Leith Mitchell, um, to the stage, to join us. Uh, for the last three years, Leith has been the Director of Inclusion and Diversity for the Department of Education, leading the department's we all belong workforce inclusion and diversity framework, across the 90,000 plus workforce (laughs). Prior to that, Leith facilitated executive inclusive leadership coaching, diversity diagnostic research, and gender diversity strategy development for ASX Boards. So it's great to have you join us, our panel today.

Everyone, I hope you've got some questions. We have people with roaming mics, so if you have a question for our panel, please put up your hand and, um, and I'll- I'll acknowledge you as appropriate. And we do have some questions coming in from our online audience too, which is great. So looking down the lens of that camera again, send through your questions, online audience, through the chat function. So, maybe I'll start off first. And I might just move my chair a little bit here, Carly are you comfortable there?

Carly Findlay: Yep.

Helen Chenery: Leith, are you comfortable there?

Leith: Yes.

Helen Chenery: Excellent. Okay. Um, let's start off with, uh, perhaps a, uh, and I'll turn to you first, Leith, if I may. Um, perhaps a qu- uh, a personal story that you'd like to share with our audience today, about- about bias or inequality or discrimination? Um, and particularly what you learned from it, and how you might, um, facilitate change in the workplace on that.

Leith: Thanks, Helen. And I'm so glad to be here today. Um, and because this is the first time I've spoken, I too want to pay my respects to traditional custodians of the lands in which we meet. Um, and also pay respects to elders, past, present and emerging. Um, I also just want to acknowledge, um, Queensland Health really leading the way in terms of reframing the relationships with our first nation's people.

Um, it is- it is, to answer your question (laughs), um, that, um Queensland Health have, uh, the- the chief, uh, um, sorry, the chief, um, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Officer, Haylene Grogan. And so, um, not- not similar to other or- departments or other organisations, where you have very senior people in the room making decisions about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters. So when you ask me about a personal story that I share, quite often when I go into board rooms, we're discussing matters about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and there's not a single Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander person in the room.

So when I think of my own personal story of inclusion, I think about the work that we've been doing at the Department of Education of the last couple of years, where we have been co-designing services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. So not creating strategies or plans, or- or, um, you know, or services, and then putting them out there for consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but asking our own Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to be in the room and to tell us, what do your government services need to look like? That's my story of personal inclusion.

Helen Chenery: Well- well said. It- it's not rocket science, is it? It should be everywhere. Um, Carly, can I, um, uh, direct a question to you, from one of our online attendees, Lesley? Um, she writes that you are a talented lady.

Carly Findlay: Thank you.

Helen Chenery: And you are. Um, and able to express yourself writing, uh, in writing and verbally. What advice could you offer to disabled women experiencing

similar conscious and unconscious biases, but who don't necessarily have the ability to discuss and or address these- these issues, that is stand up for themselves and others?

Carly Findlay: Yep. I think maybe sometimes there's a perception that disabled people are voiceless. You know, that there's that phrase, like voice- a voice for the voiceless. But if you really listen and facilitate a way of communicating, you'll see that people can communicate in a way that they're able to. So, so there's that. Um, I know that often it isn't safe to speak up, particularly if you work in a government organisation as well. Like, I know when I worked for the government, I couldn't speak on issues, um, which I found really hard.

So I think getting your story out in- in the way that you can is important. Um, telling someone that's trusted, um, you know, that you trust, your story. Also, um, if you're able to, and if you feel confident to, post things on social media. Start a blog, start a podcast, go on other people's podcasts to discuss- to discuss issues. Um, communicate in a way that you're able to, as I said before. It doesn't have to be verbally or written, it could be in art form, you know, visual or performance art. Um, it could be asking someone else to tell your story as well.

Um, speaking to the- if- if, you know, if you have been experiencing abuse, speaking to the dis-disability royal commission, I know that they're taking submissions until the, uh, December this year. And speaking to them, apparently, is safe and confidential. I can't vouch for that, because I haven't, um, submitted any-anything. Um, but that- but I- but I've actually found like the best thing for me is speaking on social media, and finding that like-minded connection.

I mentioned Imani Barbarin before. Imani facilitates these great hashtags on twitter, that create both awareness of disability issues, and community. And so if you follow Imani, who I think is @crutchesandspice on Instagram, and maybe her name, Imani Barbarin, on Twitter, you'll see that these hashtags just bring all these people along, and bring these like-minded experiences along.

Helen Chenery: Excellent. Thank you, Carly. I might pick up on, uh, your mention of a safe en- safe workplace later. But at the moment we've got a question from someone in the audience. So, thank you. Thank you.

Melissa: Thank you. Um, thanks so much for, um, today, and for sharing, uh, your experiences and stories. Um, my name's Melissa Fox and I'm from Health Consumers, Queensland. And, um, uh, we do exactly what you were describing, Leith, uh, partnering patients and carers, uh, with the health system, um, particularly over the last couple of years, uh, to support the COVID pandemic response. Carly, I'm particularly keen, uh, for us to hear from you today, um, as we move forward living with

COVID, uh, with planned care coming back online into the recovery and reform phase. Uh, if you could wave a magic wand and, uh, receive what you would see as good care moving forward, um, what would that look like?

Carly Findlay: Um, it wouldn't be scrapping masks in a public setting. It would mean that I think masks were a really easy way to ensure that the spread of COVID is eliminated. It would be keeping telehealth. Um, I've been using telehealth for the last two years and my ... I, I go the Royal Melbourne Hospital and there, um, you know, at, at one stage, there ... They describe themselves as the COVID epicenter of Melbourne and, um, and so, all of my appointments have been on online, which has been great, and my GP appointments have been as well. AlthoughI have found that there's been some admin issues. So, like, my scripts, I don't know where they go because (laughs) I'm not there to get it from the, um, you know, the doctor.

I also think that, um, it is really important to remember that living with COVID, for some people, is easy, but living with COVID for disabled people and older people, people who are immunocompromised, young people who can't get vaccinated, people who can't get vaccinated as well, that's really hard and we're ... You know, many of us still are isolating, and so it's important to remember that, um, and also that I think some of the media around COVID, particularly from our prime minister, from the NSW government particularly, has been very dismissive. Um, they talk about preexisting conditions and I've seen a, a great tweet, which is quite alarming as well, th- the term pre, preexisting condition is similar to what was she wearing, you know, when she was raped? Because the preexisting condition has almost justified these deaths, but every person who's died mattered and every life has been worthy and valuable, and so, switching our mindset from people with preexisting conditions are worthless, uh, that needs to happen.

I don't know whether you remember in America recently the CDC, I- I'm not sure what position she held at the CDC, but she said, "Oh, it's great that, um, the 75% of deaths had been those of, with preexisting conditions," as though that ma- you know, that was worth less. So, pr- yeah, switching that. Um, th- there is so many things. Please wear a mask if you can. I know that it's a hassle, but it helps and, yeah, and don't shake hands (laughs).

Helen Chenery: No, no.

Carly Findlay: When I ... Well, I was in Sydney last year and we thought that the pandemic was over and, uh, Sydneysiders were just acting like it never happened and then COVID hit them, you know, with their three month

lockdown or whatever. But people were tryna shake my hand and I said, "I'm from Melbourne, we don't do that," (laughs).

Helen Chenery: Um, thank you, Carly. Let's not shake hands, let's not and let's not ... Let's keep that going and heaven forbid we get back into the let's go in for the kiss or is it the double kiss or is it the hug as well or the ... Oh, that's just too much. So, thank you, Carly, good, a good reminder for us. Um, our online attendees, please keep those questions coming in. Really grateful for you for sending those in.

Um, I have a, um, a question about role models for you both. Um, maybe could I start with you? Do you think role models are important in this space and if you say yes, why, and if you say no, why? (laughs)

Leith: Can I say yes and no? (laughs)

Helen Chenery: (laughs)

Leith: Um, I think role models are absolutely important and, um, we've seen some role models, um, here this morning, um, and we've also heard from role models, um, Grace Tame and Brittany Higgins. So, I think that personal story telling and role models are incredibly important. But if it doesn't translate to change, every single one of us taking action and making tangible change, what part does role modeling play? So, when I think about, um, the, the Press Club speeches, if, if you just saw the media sound bites, um, you heard role modeling or story telling. But if you read the speech or if you heard the full speech, you would've heard both them of speak to systemic change.

Um, and I know we have, um, Dr. Linda Colley, um, very lucky to have her in the audience today who's been recently appointed, um, as the, um, Special Commissioner for, um, equity and diversity, and in that short time she's been here, um, you may not have, um, heard about it yet, but the amount of system change that we are, um, all going to be expected, um, to implement, um, will absolutely address some of the inequities, um, that we find, um, in our system.

Can I just say, um, another role model, um, that I have, there's many, but one is, um, Libby Lyons, the, um, s- previous sex discrimination commissioner, um, sorry, at a federal level ... Sorry, the WGEA, um, commissioner at a federal level, um, and for the last six years, you may or may not know this being in government, but for the last six years, the federal government has collected data from every single organisation in the private sector that has more than 100 employees on what is your gender demographic, how much are you paying, um, each, um, you know, classification, do you have domestic family violence policies, do you have flexible work policies, and any one of you can go onto th- WGEA's website, it's the federal government agency's website and you

can interrogate, you can type in a private sector organisation over the size of 100 employees and you can go in and you can see how many men, how many women, how many general managers, how many CEOs. You know, you can split by gender, you can look at pay, you can look at all of this information.

But does government do that? No. So, um, we're very, very, um, I, I would say grateful to have, um, the Queensland Government very focused, um, on this and, um, Linda Colley will be bringing in, you know, some of those changes around government reporting on our gender equity measures, so using data to actually start to create change and take action.

Helen Chenery: Thank you. Carly, do you want to add to that question?

Carly Findlay: Um, I think it's important to have the right role models as well, you know? Um, in that terrible interview on 60 Minutes when Scott Morrison wheeled out Jenny to say how great he is, um, you know, Jenny sort of dismissed those outspoken people, you know, like Grace Tame, um, and we've also seen just recently, um, Senator Lidia Thorpe was talking about, you know, she, she covers Aboriginal deaths in custody a lot in, um, in Parliament and, and you see the white women speaking over her, and so I think it's very important to choose the role models that are on the right side of values, even if they are outspoken and make people uncomfortable and, um, I did an event with Lidia a few years ago and it was, it was online and I just thought, you know, she's, she's someone I wanna work with because she was just so honest and courageous and articulate and I know that she gets so much flack for being outspoken, but probably more so because she's a black woman and people find that uncomfortable. So, yeah, choose your role, role models right, yep.

Helen Chenery: Um, any questions from the audience? I'm a bit su- ... Uh, thank you, we're got a roving mic just coming up to you.

Keola Westcott: Thank you. Uh, lovely to hear you all speak. My name's Keola Westcott and I work for Queensland Health in the built infrastructure sector. So, look, we've got, um, some progress in the space of doing some co-design in the aged care space and also the mental health space and there's a couple of, uh, instrumental people in the room who've been right behind us, including, uh, Mel Fox and Sandra Heir. Uh, but just listening to you, Carly, when you were speaking, I mean, we do have the accessibility requirements built into the DDA Act, uh, DDA 1995, but just listening to you, it sounds like we can do a whole lot more than just meet the bare minimum. So, I was really curious, um, if you had any lived experience or thoughts on how we could better engage the disabled community in both the designing process and the experience process in built infrastructure.

Carly Findlay: Yeah, great question. Um, I think it is about inviting people, and as Leith said, you know, having people in the room with lived experience, there's the saying, nothing about us without us, and making sure that things are, um, to standard but hearing from different people's experiences, and also knowing that someone who has a certain diagnosis experiences different to another person with that same diagnosis, getting, getting people, you know, involved in that co-design is really important, and know that there's also gonna be competing access needs as well.

You know, someone who, um, who is deaf, for example, um, requires Auslan, um, but captioning might not necessarily work for them because English isn't their first language, it's Auslan. Um, getting someone like Alicia Matthews involved in that co-design, as I mentioned, you know, she's often involved in this kind of, um, transport planning, that would be really great. Um, yeah, making sure people are involved from the start, and also, it's really hard to re- retrofit something, so making sure that a system or a process is accessible from the start instead of having to go back and redesign it, asking people what they want I think is important and paying people as well. There's so many of these, you know, panels, advisory panels, bodies etc that you're expected to provide this lived experience for free, but when you are paid, it's better because disabled people are under, or unemployed. Thanks for that question.

Leith: And can I just-

Carly Findlay: Yeah.

Leith: Can I just add, um, to that? Um, the Department of Education's been running our neuro diversity pilot where we're looking at traditional recruitment practices. You know, d- do they really work for everybody? Are we assessing confidence in, in an interview, or are we assessing competence? So, we're looking at, um ... And without making a stereotype, um, you know, many neuro diverse people find traditional recruitment processes difficult because of, um, you know, reading social cues. So, in that half an hour or hour interview that, that you've got, you're tryna make an impression, read social cues, respond and also appear confident and competent at the same time, quite difficult.

Um, so, rather than going externally and looking for lived experience externally, one of the first questions we asked was, who in our department identifies as neuro diverse and wants to come and tell us about their recruitment process? What could we do better? What's working? What's not working? So, using the people in your own organisation, um, as well as experts, um, to start, um, asking, where, where can we do better? How can we do better? We should do better.

We need to do better so that we can absolutely tap into the strengths of our own people.

Carly Findlay: Yeah, some of the, um, things that I do at my work in, in Melbourne Fringe when we do recruitment or even when people apply for an arts grant is have different ways of applying-

Leith: Yeah.

Carly Findlay: ... and so, we are ... We have a, um, written form that they can apply through. Um, they can make an Auslan video and we get an interpreter in to translate that. Um, they can e- even apply over the phone. You know, I've engaged with artists who, um, can't use our system because it's too complicated, and so we've had a phone call and I input the, um, information. So, having a wide variety, and also putting that information out in the wide variety of formats as well. So, like, Word document, plain text, um, with pictures, um, Auslan, audio file, all of that is good, too.

Leith: And your own employees can give you that (laughs).

Carly Findlay: Yeah.

Helen Chenery: Can I shift a little bit now and ask you each, what are you optimistic about this International Women's Day?

Leith: Uh (laughs), uh, yeah, yeah. Um, I think there's, this is my, my reading of the room, there's, there's a real mix between rage and hope and I think that that probably sums up my own, um, feelings, um, about gender equity or gender inequity or discrimination or harassment. Um, so, I'm, I'm, I'm raging, I have daughters who are in grade 11 and grade 12 who are, um, experiencing some of these issues right now as young women and I think, honestly, for all this time that we've been focused on gender inequity, that we've been focused on sexual harassment, that they're hearing other young women speak and are finding their voice to speak as well. So, yeah, I feel rage about, um, the fact this still continues.

I feel a rage that people will often say, "But the next generation will fix it," (laughs). "Like, you don't need to do anything." Um, every single one of you in this room surely has an action to take away from listening to people today. So, I feel hope that if every single one of us thinks that it's our job to, um, address gender inequity, that we will absolutely start to see some change. I also feel hope that ... It's really hard to change individuals one at a time, so we've got a lot of people online, a lot of people in the room here. So, what are the system changes that you are making? Every single one of you interacts with the system every day. So, are you asking yourself questions like, why are we a- why are we asking

for sex in a recruitment form? Are we asking for gender (laughs), and then what are the options that people can tick?

You know, every single one of you interacts with the system, so let's start thinking about what are the system changes that we can all be undertaking to increase, um, or to breakdown, break the bias, I guess, breakdown, um, issues.

Helen Chenery: Carly, optimism.

Carly Findlay: I don't know. Most days I look at the news and despair. Um, I feel optimistic that there are more young people speaking up about issues, but, um, again, there's the rage and I think the thing that I saw recently that made me really upset was the Religious Discrimination Bill and how that affected transgender people, young people, particularly young trans people and that, their identity was erased, and so, ensuring that people from the trans community are, know that they're loved and respected and that people s- take the right side of history in making these decisions and, you know, I, I was qui- ... I watched th- the Q&A episode on mental health and I think that question came up about the religious freedom bill and I was, or Discrimination Bill, rather, um, and I was shocked that they didn't have any transgender people there to speak.

So, making sure that they're in the room, that, uh ... Also, I'm hopeful that the things that we saw in the pandemic will continue, like the, the accessibility aspect will continue and that we've seen people can be trusted working from home, people, um, can have telehealth etc, that, that sort of stuff, and I'm also really hopeful that people like Grace Tame and Brittany Higgins are paving the way for others to tell their story, 'cause that's power, you know?

Helen Chenery: Please thank our wonderful panelists. Thank you so much [inaudible 01:29:37]. So, what a, what a, a richly, um, informative, uh, morning we've had today, um, and, and just wonderful, wonderful presenters and speakers and panelists. Um, I was asked to very quickly give a, a summing up of the takeaways today. Um (laughs), I'll tell you what I will offer though, and this is a no obligation, no fee offer to those who have organised the event today. I'm president of the Queensland Academy of Arts and Sciences. One of our missions is to write up important documents based on the richness of information and opinion and experience that we've heard today for dissemination broadly through government, not-for-profit, philanthropy etc, etc.

So, if there is an opportunity to capture all that has been discussed today and we've got it on record, then there are people out there who can do a, a policy paper or a, a think tank paper that will capture all

that we've, all that we've discussed so it won't go to waste, 'cause we don't want that to happen. So, just a thought.

Um, so, and I also really want to thank, um, our fabulous professional back of house team. Um, their, um, outstanding work, um, has really helped this to go so smoothly and you've worked tirelessly to ensure that it's seamless and, and valuable to your career development. You'll also receive a short survey in the coming days along with a link, um, to the recording of today's event. So, please fill in those surveys, they'll help as this series runs out in the future, um, and, um, please ensure that we're delivering the events that you want and you'll have the opportunity to comment on that if you do the survey.

So, I'd also like you to encourage, uh, to encourage you to share this recording with your colleagues and friends. Positive action is driven through collective efforts. So, once again, everyone, thank you so much for attending. What a fabulous morning we've had and what a fabulous International Women's Day, #breakthebias2022, we're going to have. So, thank you [01:32:00] all and take care.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:32:02]