**Australian Shadow Report Delegation Opening Statement**

**Damian Griffis**

On behalf of the Australian CRPD Shadow Report Delegation, I would like to thank the distinguished members of the Committee for the opportunity for to share our experiences of the human rights situation of people with disability in Australia.

Australia is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, ranked third on the UN Human Development Index. However, people with disability do not enjoy the same high standard of living or the same respect for human rights, with high rates of poverty and unemployment.

For my people, the First Nations peoples, we experience rates of disability that are at least twice that of the general population. First Nations people with disability face even higher rates of extreme poverty and disadvantage. Yet Australia has little domestic focus for its obligations under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We argue that Australia must be held to the highest possible standards with regard to its CRPD obligations.

Australia is better placed than most other Member States to meet the needs of people with disability and realise their human rights, but since our initial CRPD review in 2013, there has been little to no action in implementing the Concluding Observations of this Committee. In fact, these Concluding Observations were not even incorporated into the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020, which is the mechanism for CRPD implementation in Australia. Australia has not withdrawn its interpretative declarations on articles 12, 17 and 18.

For a comprehensive outline of our situation, I draw the Committee’s attention to our Shadow Report and our Factsheets that have been provided to you.

My colleagues will now share with you their personal experiences covering a range of critical human rights issues.