



## **PASTORAL LETTER**

### **International Day of People with Disability 2017**

**By The Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB  
Archbishop of Perth**

30 November, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

Our International Day of People with Disability will be celebrated on Sunday 3 December, with the theme for 2017 being “Transformation towards a sustainable and resilient society for all”.

Our Catholic tradition understands every human life to be equal, inherently sacred and worthy of dignity and respect as the bedrock of a just society.

This year will mark the 25th anniversary of this special day, which promotes an understanding of the issues experienced by people with disability and celebrates their achievements.

As a Catholic community walking in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd, International Day of People with Disability is an opportunity for each one of us to make positive contributions to the lives of 4.3 million Australians with a disability with the hope of breaking down physical, technological and attitudinal barriers and realising an inclusive society for everyone.

Within our Archdiocese, we are committed to achieving an inclusive society and have established dedicated agencies who offer high quality support for people with disability and their families living in Western Australia.

Some of these agencies include Identitywa, the Emmanuel Centre, Catholic Association for Special Education Support, Catholic Ministry for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Personal Advocacy Service. We also have the vital services of MercyCare, Southern Cross Care, MercyHealth and St John of God Health Care.

- In 2015, almost one in five Australians reported living with disability (18.3 per cent or 4.3 million people). A further 22.1 per cent of Australians had a long-term health condition but no disability, while the remaining 59.5 per cent had neither disability nor a long-term health condition.
- Some 3.7 million Australians with disability, had a specific limitation or restriction such as a schooling or employment restriction (e.g. unable to attend or required special equipment) and/or limitation with core activities - communication, mobility or self-care.
- Participating in the workforce is important for social inclusion and economic independence. Having disability can impact on a person’s ability and opportunities to participate in paid work.



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The Church here in our Archdiocese is committed to making herself a 'welcoming home' for all.

It is my hope that in our parishes, the doors are always open to people with disability, and as a Catholic community, we ensure our liturgy is accessible and inclusive so that everyone is invited to be active in the service of the Church.

I take this opportunity to remind everyone that as people walking in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd, we have a duty to pray for people with a disability, their families and people who provide them support.

As a Catholic community, I encourage you to start a conversation about disability at your workplace, school or community and to show your support this Sunday 3 December, 2017.

*+ Timothy Costelloe SDB*

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