

Interchange and supporting inclusive volunteering

Interchange Incorporated is a member organisation for disability service providers who offer social and recreational opportunities for families and individuals living with disability. Their vision is to be part of a community that shares responsibility for the wellbeing of all, celebrates and promotes difference and strives for inclusiveness and choice.

For Interchange Incorporated, the introduction of the NDIS raised concerns about the sustainability of volunteer supported programs in the disability sector, for which they have been advocating strongly for past few years to ensure retention of these programs. Supported by the Department of Health and Human Services, the organisation was commissioned to identify and understand the current volunteer operating models and the outcomes they achieve in order to provide authoritative advice to government as well as targeted advice to organisations about opportunities for funding.

Partnering with the University of Melbourne, Interchange Incorporated undertook research to develop an evidence base that aimed to inform and influenced policy and practice around volunteered supported models in the disability sector nationally. The International Literature Review showed this is a first of its kind research in disability.

Many organisations have currently stopped or paused their volunteer supported programs until funding decisions are announced. Interchange Incorporated hopes the research project ensures not only retention of volunteers, but growth of these important programs.

This significant research project, undertaken to ensure the retention and sustainability of volunteers in the disability sector was nominated to the Volunteering Victoria 2018 State Awards by one of the organisation's member agencies. Winning the Research and Collaboration Award has assisted in raising awareness of the critical research they are conducting and the importance of collaborative work.

Congratulations to Interchange Incorporated on their well-deserved Research and Collaboration Award at the 2018 Volunteering Victoria State Awards.

