

Ms. Emma Davidson

**Minister for Disability**

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

GPO Box 1020 Canberra ACT 2601

Emailed to: davidson@act.gov.au

CC: Dr Elizabeth Moore. Coordinator General Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing

CC: Amanda Charles. Senior Director Office for Disability

Dear Minister Davidson,

**RE: Feedback regarding the ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy Respite Effect and Recovery Grants**

Meridian is Canberra's leading community-based, peer-led organisation for people living with HIV/AIDS, and sex, sexuality and gender diverse communities. Meridian was pleased to be one of the organisations chosen to process Grant applications for the ACT COVID-19 Disability Strategy Respite Effect and Recovery Grants.

We are writing to sincerely thank you for implementing the Respite Effect and Recovery Grants program and its associated process.

Meridian received a significant volume of positive feedback from our service users regarding this grant program and process. Feedback included that the Grants were accessible because they were not linked to a cumbersome bureaucratic framework and assessment process. We were also told that our service users appreciated the ease of access; not having to prove their disability status with medical evidence or other challenging and disempowering evidentiary processes; not getting lost trying to navigate a complex system; the deepening of linkages and networks formed through connection to the support organisation who was administering the Grant and; perhaps most powerfully, **service users told us that they profoundly appreciated being trusted that they needed this Grant, not only by the organisation supporting them, but also by the ACT Government.**

We feel it is important to pass on this positive feedback, and to say thank you to your office and the Office for Disability for conceptualising and implementing this valued, accessible and capacity building Respite Effect and Recovery Grants program.



Our LGBTIQ+ communities experience disproportionate rates of mental distress, homelessness, alcohol, tobacco and drug use and domestic and family violence, all linked to exposure to discrimination, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, prejudice and stigma based on our identities. Suffering is frequently compounded for members of our LGBTIQ+ communities with intersecting marginalised identities, such as LGBTIQ+ people with disability. We thank you for enabling us to support our LGBTIQ+ people living with disability, in such an effective, respectful and worthwhile way.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Moss', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Philippa Moss  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
7 July 2021