

## Diverse Ability

Today as part of Diversity week we are discussing **Diverse Ability**.

The word "Disability" refers to any condition that restricts a person's mental, sensory or mobility functions. It may be caused by accident, trauma, genetics or disease.

Diverse Ability is a massive Can of worms as well as an umbrella for a range different conditions which span from being physical or mental as well as a result of later life experiences or #BornThisWay or even whether these diversities are visible to the rest of the world or not. It is important to note that everyone's stories are different. A disability may be temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired, visible or invisible. As we grow into a world which is constantly striving for acceptance and inclusivity it is important to reflect, especially on weeks like these on the representation of disability and such conditions in the media as communities such as these strive to make themselves heard and seen to the wider world and to have their stories heard so that their own hardships and experiences of prejudice and stigma do not have to be endowed onto those who come after them.

A great example of such activism is clearly demonstrated by Australian Model Madeline Stuart. Madeline is currently in her early twenties and has been described as the world's first professional model with Down syndrome. She has experienced astonishing success already in her short career and has captured media attention both in Australia and abroad. She has been nominated for the Pride of Australia and Young Australian of the Year award in 2015 and 2016 and named model of the year for 2016 by World Fashion Media. She is an advocate for social change in the representation of Down syndrome in the Media and is constantly shattering glass ceilings in her ongoing success in the modelling industry earning her great acclaim and support Both in Australia and abroad.



Another great example is Australian Paralympian Gold Medalist, Wheelchair Tennis and basketball player, Radio show host, activist and Motivational Speaker, Dylan Alcott. When Dylan was just three days old he received surgery to remove a spinal tumor which left him a paraplegic. Not one to be deterred, Dylan always showed a great passion for sports and at just 18 years old won a gold medal in the Beijing Paralympics. After earning a silver medal at the 2012 London Paralympics Dylan entered a mini-retirement before he returned onto the sporting scene as a Wheelchair Tennis player instead in order to give himself "another chance to push (himself)" and to "see what (I) was capable of". At the Rio 2016 Paralympics he won gold medals in the Men's Squad Singles and Doubles. In that same year he was named the Australian Paralympian of the Year. Dylan is an absolute national treasure with his infectious sense of enthusiasm and humour as well as his competitive grit on the court who never let his paraplegia stop him from being Number 1.

