**Transcript**

***Dr Patsie Frawley – Self advocacy and inclusion: speaking up over the years***

My research is primarily with people with an intellectual disability and looking at how they can have a voice and a say about the things that matter to them in their lives. And this particular research project is about the involvement of the self-advocacy movement in shaping policy and practices in intellectual disability. So we’re interested in what has shaped that and what can, what can be done, based on what we find, to strengthen the voice of people with an intellectual disability in policy and practice.

Firstly, this is a history that we’re doing and it’s the history of a group called Reinforce Self-Advocacy Group which is the first research, sorry, self-advocacy group in Victoria. And self-advocacy is a grass roots movement of people with an intellectual disability. In terms of the outcomes we’ve got some shared outcomes we’re looking for because we’re doing this as a collaborative research project with academics and people with an intellectual disability. So, we’re, firstly hoping to find out how to do that better, how to work in an inclusive way and secondly, we’d like to be able to very accurately document the history of this group in such a way that meets their purpose which is to be clear about what they’ve done over the years and to give a clear message about how that’s made a difference for people with an intellectual disability. And then thirdly, particularly from an academic perspective I guess, what we’re interested in is how that information can help shape the way that policy is, is set to involve people with an intellectual disability and to learn also from that I think, to get a better picture of what self-advocacy is from an Australian perspective because most of what we know about self-advocacy actually comes from the Northern Hemisphere. So we would like to get a clear picture of that too. And, I think finally what we want to be able to find out is, in terms of the outcomes is, we want, we want it to be a lively and clear kind of description and overview of this history because, and particularly we want the voices and the people with an intellectual disability to come through so we’re doing life stories with people as well.

Well, people with an intellectual disability are probably one of the most marginalised groups, certainly of people with disabilities. So, they’re a group of people who are the highest users of government funded services but they have some really low outcomes, I guess, around things like social inclusion and in terms of things like abuse. They have very high rates of abuse and involvement with the Corrections system. Now, our work won’t directly impact on that but what we believe is the better understanding of self-advocacy and how to engage people with an intellectual disability in policy and in shaping policy will hopefully bring them into, more clearly, into that policy formulation sort of space and increase opportunities for them to have good lives and to have a say about how those lives should be.