



## LEADING AUSTRALIAN COMPANIES MAKE A STAND FOR DISABILITY INCLUSION

- *Nine of Australia's biggest companies have committed to ending the disability inequality crisis by signing up to The Valuable 500*
- *This announcement is made as new report reveals 42% of people on jobseeker benefits in Australia have a disability*
- *Westpac and Telstra are the latest to join, following AGL, ANZ Global, Macquarie Group, APM, Gilbert + Tobin, Mirvac and Brambles who have already committed.*
- *The Valuable 500 is the global movement which is working to get 500 of the world's largest businesses to commit to placing disability inclusion on their business leadership agendas.*

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November Sydney:** Nine of Australia's leading companies are making a stand against the disability inequality crisis by signing up to The Valuable 500. The global movement, launched at Davos in 2019, is the largest global CEO network of businesses fighting for inclusion.

Westpac and Telstra today join AGL, ANZ Global, Macquarie Group, APM, Gilbert + Tobin, Mirvac and Brambles who have already committed to inclusion on the board agenda. They join global brands including Microsoft, Bloomberg, Salesforce, Financial Times, AirBnB, Google, and Coca Cola Europe.

Over 4.4 million people in Australia, 1 in 5 people, have some form of disability, and they are routinely ignored from society. By engaging with the most influential business leaders and brands, The Valuable 500 wants to create a tipping point within business that unlocks the value of the 1.3 billion people living with disabilities around the world. The latest commitment from these 9 companies will affect over 150,000 employees with a combined revenue of over Australian \$66.92 billion.

Launched by activist Caroline Casey, The Valuable 500 now has over 335 companies signed up. The combined revenue of our current members is now over \$4.5 trillion, with 12 million employees and reaching across 31 countries.

Andrew Liveris, Former Chairman and CEO of The Dow Chemical Company and Global Champion of The Valuable 500 says:

"It was a privilege for me to have been the Chairman and CEO of Dow for 15 years. On the job, I learnt about barriers and unconscious biases. Last century's conscious biases have become this century's unconscious biases. The topic of ignoring disability in the inclusion statement is one that is near and dear to my heart.

I am delighted that the CEOs of these amazing, iconic, Australian companies have joined the Valuable 500 making the commitment, to place disability inclusion on their business leadership agendas. Our license to operate comes from humanity. It's from people. That is our license to be here. To include all of us, and reflect all of us in their markets, in their talent search, in their workforce, means our quest to build out the opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has just got so much stronger. This is inclusion of the fullest kind.



I applaud the work of the Valuable 500 and the recruitment of these likeminded CEOs who are setting the tone from the top, leading from the front, but following fast which is what the integrated organisation now demands today.”

Andy Penn, Chief Executive Officer of Telstra said:

“I’m proud to have committed Telstra to the Valuable 500 which mirrors our own mission to continually improve accessibility and inclusion. Our purpose: to create a connected future where everyone can thrive, guides and challenges us to create products and services for all our customers - ensuring no-one is left behind. An initiative like the Valuable 500 plays an incredibly important role in raising awareness of disability inequality and what's needed make the world a more inclusive place.”

Peter King, CEO of Westpac says:

“Westpac has a long history of supporting accessibility and we’re pleased to join The Valuable 500 initiative to drive more awareness of the importance of disability inclusion. Westpac has had an Access and Inclusion Plan for almost 20 years now, which outlines our commitments to providing an inclusive and accessible workplace for our employees, customers and the community. This is supported by our continued and proactive focus on the accessible design of products, services, communications, careers and experiences across our portfolio. At Westpac, we believe there should be no barriers to success.”

Caroline Casey, founder The Valuable 500 says: “Recent statistics came to light in Australia highlighting 42% of people on jobseeker benefits had disabilities that prevented them from working full-time, compared to only 7% in 2007. They are facing an inequality crisis that needs to be addressed. No country can reach its full potential when it is ignoring parts of society for being different. I am thrilled to have these companies on board and look forward to more global brands and businesses recognising the importance of inclusion across the board”.

For more information please visit: [www.thevaluable500.com](http://www.thevaluable500.com)

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