

## Sexuality and disability

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There are many people with disabilities who are prevented from leading enjoyable and active sexual lives because of the serious barriers that we face. As a person with a physical disability and a PhD in psychology, body image, sexuality and disability, I understand that these barriers are largely social and stem from the negative attitudes that many of us have towards physical difference. The most prevalent and painful social attitude for many people with disabilities is that we are unworthy sexual partners destined to a life without sexual relationships.

It is very difficult to change social attitudes and as an advocate for people with disabilities I have had to put that one in the "too hard basket" for now. Sexuality and disability advocacy can begin instead at the level of social policy by challenging the range of discriminatory practices that attack the sexual rights of people with disabilities. For example, we need to change the rules that prevent people with disabilities who are living in supported accommodation from having sex and relationships in their own homes. We need to remove restrictive planning laws that make adult shops inaccessible to wheelchair users. We need a sex positive approach to the provision of disability services so that the sexual needs of people with disabilities are not only considered within the context of "inappropriate behaviour" but as an important part of a person's life.

**The Australian sex party, is the first party that I know of that has a platform to address these issues and protect the sexual rights of people with disabilities.** Historically Fiona Patten has been a very strong advocate for people with disabilities on sexuality and broader issues. I am excited by the prospect of a party with Fiona Patten at the helm being elected to Parliament, she is a fantastic ally with a long-term commitment to speaking out for the sexual rights of people with disabilities. I look forward to seeing people with disabilities get behind the party and help shape its policy platform.