Mana in the Morning Podcast

**Pauline**

3CR acknowledges the Kulin nation, the true owners, caretakers and custodians of the land from which we broadcast. We pay our deep respect to their elders past and present, and recognize that sovereignty was never ceded. I want to also acknowledge all sovereign peoples of all First Nations, from whose lands the people you will hear on today's broadcast reside on and have spoken from.

**Pauline**

You are listening to Mana in the Morning, the first show in the International Day of people with disability broadcast, which this year is called Imagining Disability Justice. And we're gonna gently ease you into this packed day of programming. There's gonna be a lot of intense discussions today. So we just want to ease you into it. My name is Pauline, and I'm a Gunantuna woman, an islander, an immigrant settler on Boonwurrung land. I have multiple disabilities myself, and I'm really wrapped to be in this special studio with my sibs today. So who wants to go next?

**Mereani**

[laughter] Thank you. Hi, everyone. My name is Mereani Qalovakawasa. I am Fijian, and I have lupus. So I was diagnosed 16 and a half years ago, and currently living here in Naarm, Melbourne, and chillin.

**Leilani/Liv**

And I am Leilani. I am Samoan and I'm chronically ill and queer and non binary. I was born on Noongar country, so called Perth, and I've lived on Boonwurrung, Woiwurrung and Wurundjeri country for about nine years now. And I'm very happy to be here with both of you and good morning everyone who is listening.

**Pauline**

As I said earlier, we have a packed show today we actually have five interviews. To share. We have music by artists with disabilities to play. First one I'm going to play is a song by a group that someone actually recommended to me. In a Facebook group for disabled artists. The band is "Altar Boy", it is a queer electro pop band from Perth and three of its members are deaf and hard of hearing. And all songs are performed in Australia, which is Australian sign language. They say of themselves, "expect shiny pop with chaotic performance on and deaf trans bodies". This song is called "Bad Dream Break In".

**Alter Boy**

[lyrics] Somebody snuck in in the dark and they took me far away and you told me you would wait. Sunlight hit me on the open road. Sunrise coming up, coming up. Sunlight hold me but you'll never know. Sunlight. Wake me up. When we're in the darkness and we're under covers. Tell me that you're scared to be out there. Wake me up. Lover with the blood thirst. Look me in the eyes first. Tell me you're not going anywhere, I’ll show you where it hurts. Show me where you love me. And when I'm gone, when I'm gone. Show me where you love me, I’ll show you where it hurts. Show me where you love me.

**Pauline**

So this year's broadcast is titled Imagining Disability Justice. And so we just wanted to take a moment to sort of explain the concept. So this year the theme and the artwork selected for the broadcast was inspired by incredible book Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice, inspired by the care and consideration that disabled community members have engaged in this year to take care of each other, to take care of family members, friends, locally and globally. We saw, you know, terrible discussions being had with eugenicist overtones about our community. And so it's also been a time to sort of think about what frameworks that we need to adopt moving forward, that would actually take care of everybody. Disability Justice is such a framework. Last year, Liv was on the Breakfast Show with me last year, actually.

**Pauline**

And I think you'll remember that we actually talked about Disability Justice quite a bit. We talked about the framework quite a bit.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah.

**Pauline**

I think like that whole episode is still online. So if people want to check out that episode on the 3CR Disability Day webpage for last year, they will find us talking at length about Disability Justice. Sins Invalid, the community organisers who sort of created the framework, came up with a name, came up with the 10 Principles of Disability Justice. So this whole broadcast today is sort of building and expounding on that, but looking towards the future a little bit more than thinking about, okay, this pandemic has shown us everything that is wrong with the world. It's showing us everything that is wrong with the systems that we operate within, we are bound to, we know this. So what else? What can we do? What can we create together to replace all of this? So that's the whole concept of imagining Disability Justice.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah I think this whole theme for this whole day broadcasting is such a beautiful idea. I think, so many people can benefit from learning, learning how much this encompasses and how much, how welcoming and inclusive Disability Justice is like, it's it. It's healing and liberatory for every, every single person. And I think the more that you delve into learning about Disability Justice and imagining it, there's so much nourishment and enrichment in places that you didn't expect to find it within yourself. And I think it's beautiful. So very happy and I hope that everyone is listening with open hearts and open minds. [giggling] Yeah.

**Pauline**

Well, with that we're gonna play an interview with Ricky Buchanan.

**Ricky Buchanan**

My name is Ricky Buchanan. My pronouns are she and hers. My disability is pretty complex and hard to describe. But among other things, it includes ME/CFS, often known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. I'm bedridden and homebound, so I can't travel at all or use a wheelchair. So aside from bathroom trips, I have to lie flat in bed 24/7, but I do have a really great assistive technology set up. So I can use my computer access the internet and phone lying down. But typing is really hard. And I have to kind of spend most of each day resting. So I do like, lots of little small bits of activity like this interview. And then in between this lots of rests.

**Pauline**

So what's your occupation?

**Ricky Buchanan**

And I'm currently just focusing all my energy on just looking after myself and just getting through each day. In the past, I've been able to do a lot of informal disability advocacy. Especially I do advocacy around people who are bedridden and homebound like me. But unfortunately, I just had to put that pretty much on hold at the moment, which is so frustrating. So I really hope that my disability gives me a break and lets me do more things in the future.

**Pauline**

Totally.

**Ricky Buchanan**

Yeah, frustration.

**Pauline**

So what is one thing you'd like people to know about how the experience of the pandemic has been for you?

**Ricky Buchanan**

It's been this weird dichotomy where, because suddenly, during the pandemic, a lot of able bodied people needed the same sort of accessibility that I needed as a person who's homebound. Suddenly, I had all this accessibility that I've been advocating for for years was dropped into my lap. But simultaneously, because I got a lot more disabled. This year, as well, I became unable to take advantage of that accessibility. So it's been this very weird combination of the things that I've been advocating for, for many years, suddenly happening. But simultaneously, because of me becoming more disabled, I wasn't able to take very much advantage of those things myself. So it's kind of joy and sorrow mixed up together. Very confusing and emotions.

**Pauline**

Bitter irony. It's terrible.

**Ricky Buchanan**

Yeah. Like, I'm so glad that all these accessibility things have happened. And I'm so, so sad. But I have to just watch them happen and not be able to really use it very much. Yeah.

**Pauline**

What are some things that have given you moments of joy or comfort this year?

**Ricky Buchanan**

I think the biggest thing has been my flatmate. Um, because of the lockdown here in Melbourne, my flatmate's been home, like so much more than, than usual. And that's been really nice for me. I've had so much more kind of social, just... contact with him being around and more time to chat and just share meals and, and just have someone you know, sitting on the sofa being around, even if we're not talking. And that's just really nice to have somebody who's not visiting, but just being around, which I find really comforting. And it doesn't take much energy, which is a really big thing, when I don't have much energy someone comes to visit, even if they're not. Even if they're not kind of demanding energy, I want to talk to them, because I know I'm not going to see them again for a while. But if someone's living here, then it's okay that we don't talk if they just sit on the sofa, and, you know, they're scrolling through whatever or playing with their phone or whatever quiet activity they're doing. And so I can just enjoy the comfort. And the having someone around, without feeling like I have to make the most of that time. Does that make sense?

**Pauline**

It really does make sense.

**Ricky Buchanan**

Yeah. So it's nice to be able to just enjoy someone existing in the same space, and not feel like you have to kind of maximize the time of that. By talking with them. Yeah, that's been really nice.

**Pauline**

What are two things that people listening to this can do to be allies to you and others living with ME/CFS?

**Ricky Buchanan**

I think the biggest thing is just to think about watching for companies who are taking away accessibility that they've added this year. Because so many companies, of course, have added accessibility this year, not because people with disabilities need it. But because able bodied people need it. And, of course, a lot of us with disabilities are really scared. But as soon as the able bodied people stop needing those things, because the pandemic comes to an end, or starts to come to an end that they're going to take away that accessibility. And the best way to be a really good ally is kind of saying, if you see companies taking away that accessibility, just remind them that there are other people out there who still need that accessibility.

**Ricky Buchanan**

And the companies know how to, the companies know how to provide it now. So this is going to be the absolute best time ever. That it's going to be the lowest cost for those companies to just keep providing accessibility. They've already done all the hard work to set it up. It's going to be the time when they're most probably likely to be susceptible to an argument of customers or workers or whatever.

**Ricky Buchanan**

Just saying, hey, people still need this. Just keep providing it. You've already done all the work. You've already set it up. Just don't shut it down. It's the best way that people can be an ally, is just to, just to point that out. Over and over and over again until companies listen. If they're not listening point it out in a public way, point it out on Twitter. Point it out in a way that the companies can't pretend that no one's saying it to them, that can have a really, really big effect much bigger than you realize when you're doing it.

**Pauline**

Ricky, thank you so much.

**Ricky Buchanan**

Thanks for having me.

**Leilani/Liv**

Next up, we have an interview with me and Arika Waulu. They are an incredible, chronically ill, Aboriginal, queer activist/person/artist and close friend of mine, who - they have started some really important initiatives this year, that service Indigenous communities and disabled individuals in the Aboriginal community. So yeah, have a listen:

**Leilani/Liv**

Hello, this is Leilani. I am here with Arika, who among many things has headed the First Nations Mutual Aid effort in so called Victoria throughout the year that has been 2020. And I will let you introduce yourself as you please. But I will say that Arika you are an incredible person, and everything that you do and your passion and commitment to justice, your work, your art and your deeply charming character and general charisma. I love it and you, and I'm very happy to be here talking with you. Would you like to introduce yourself a little bit?

**Arika Waulu**

Um, I feel like yeah, thank you so much that I feel very. I don't know. I feel very.. I'm blushing. [laughter] Um, I am Arika Waulu from Gunditjimara and Gunai nations, and from many language groups. And I would like to pay my respects to the Wurundjeri people, which I'm currently living on and working on. And the neighboring nations around my country and this country. The Boonwurrung people, the Taungurung, the Wathaurong and Dja Dja Wurrung, who are all neighbors to my countries. And yeah, I'd also just like to acknowledge my grandmother, and my grandma Alma Thorpe, and my great grandmother, Edna Brown, my grandmother's Rini King, and Ruth King, and Betty King, who were very instrumental, who were all very instrumental in the uprising of our people today.

**Leilani/Liv**

Thank you so much for that. That's so beautiful. And yeah, what a legacy and the respect and power is just.... mind blowing, you're from a strong peoples. And, you know, I see that of you all the time. And I'm always... just in such a state of admiration. Thank you for being here with me. And let's get into it a little bit. So, obviously, this year has been pretty tense with the pandemic. But you have started something really special, you started two amazing initiatives that we'll talk a little bit about today. The first being the Covid relief, First Nations Mutual Aid effort in so-called Victoria throughout the year. Tell us a little bit about that.

**Arika Waulu**

Okay, so earlier this year, we went into a pretty startling, confronting, lockdown with extreme restrictions on peoples in, particularly in Melbourne. In March, it was I'd just become... I was homeless one week, when the risk restriction started, I was living in supported accommodation in a motel. And had, you know, seen through my Facebook what was going on within my community, you know, locally and statewide and also, nationally, and internationally. Our Indigenous families across the oceans had been devastated a lot more than our peoples. So it was a bit of a warning sign, I think, for me to mobilize and get some kind of relief to people, particularly the most vulnerable ones in our community.

**Arika Waulu**

We had, we've got elders who were elders, but also people... the government declared that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 over should not leave their homes. So it was quite shocking to hear that, because obviously, you're not just considered an elder when you're 50 and over. And so that was a bit of a scare for our people. And we realized that we were in a compromised position from what we were getting, what feedback we were getting from the um... what were they?

**Arika Waulu**

The announcements, I guess, government announcements that everyone kind of, had to watch to keep up to date with what was happening. It was very scary at the time, a lot of people were not prepared. Most people were not prepared in the community. And when people started stockpiling, a lot of the disadvantaged people in the community were even more disadvantaged. And were not able to stockpile as they didn't have the access to the funds, or even the means to be able to do that. Cars, and so forth. So it just seemed very necessary to look at the remedy of that.

**Arika Waulu**

A few of my friends had started up mutual aid groups in Melbourne. And I had gotten hold of some of those friends and got some advice about setting it up. And yeah, got as much advice as I could, and started up a page on Facebook for blackfellas, 'Blackfellas COVID Support and Assistance'. And I think it's got nearly 3,000 people on there. And that was, yeah, it was very useful to have that. Lots of people, you know, were posting lots of different content, but it was good to be able to collect the resources of services and help that was available to people around the state to be able to give them some feedback, the information, I guess, through the threads.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah, that's awesome. When you're are able to sort of concentrate everything into one group and help disseminate a lot of information and resources. That's incredible, like 3,000 people. Wow. And it wasn't just sort of, I know that you were, you were doing food boxes. But I feel like that is just like, one of many, many things that you were you were doing. You put on a lot of hats, you wear a lot of hats. And I know that there's lots of different people who were in different situations.

**Leilani/Liv**

And at each time people would come to you, you'd be helping assess the situation, whatever it was, and giving assistance. So when you were doing this kind of multi level, distribution of services to community, often while you were yourself experiencing housing instability, homelessness, what kind of insights did you have into... the Aboriginal people that you were helping with disability, chronic illness, chronic pain?

Was there a disproportionate amount or is it more that kind of thing where you mentioned earlier; how Aboriginal people over 50 were told to stay inside because there's, you know, the higher rates of immunocompromisation, so there's already the disproportionate impact? What were your kind of insights and thoughts as a disabled/chronically ill person, Aboriginal person with chronic pain, helping supporting other Aboriginal people going through it and experiencing disability and whatever else?

**Arika Waulu**

I guess, for me... yeah. I was able to use my past and current experiences of, you know, chronic health issues and mobility issues, to relate to a lot of the struggles of peoples in my community, which are disproportionately high. There wasn't really one person that I have on my list that has not, is not struggling with some kind of health issue. Whether it be a mental health or physical health. Yeah, 40% of our list are over 50 and over. I can't remember what the percentage of people that had chronic health issues, but that was one of the questions that we'd ask. And pretty sure it was something like... 90 something percent of our peoples had some chronic health issue, or a health issue. Yeah.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah, that's, that's, I mean, it's not surprising, but it's absurd that, you know, it's up to grassroots people in community that are struggling themselves, because of a variety of different things that, you know, there isn't the proper services and support. It's so many things going on at once. And the responsibilities shouldn't have to fall on you so heavily, and on your community, those kinds of things. It was amazing to watch that kind of work, watch you do that work while you were going through it. It's something that no one should have to do. But has to be done. And I know, that's how you operate. And, yeah, I'm just in awe of you, I'm in awe of you [both laughing]. Anyway, anyway.

**Leilani/Liv**

Okay. So we'll talk a little bit now, about, um, how that makes you feel as someone who is, you know, dealing with complex chronic health issues and doing... shouldering all that work, doing that organizing.

**Arika Waulu**

I guess, being.. I've been physically restricted for, you know, for very long time. With my back condition, I was diagnosed when I was 19. And I had to leave my dental assisting job, because it was not very good job for people with back issues. And that was very depressing for me. And it was mentally debilitating, to have to go through that. And I had to stop with my physical activities as well, which I did. A lot of, I did boxing. And, yeah, I was training in the gym, like, six days a week.

**Arika Waulu**

So I had to stop that lifestyle, which, yeah, it was a big change. But then I grew to know, like, you know, through recovering from spinal fusion, that if I allow my pain to determine everything that I am, and then I wouldn't be, you know, doing all the things that I love. So I think, through my 20s, I really had to learn lots of hard lessons to get to this point, like, it's been a long road.

**Arika Waulu**

But yeah, I just, I think I love the fact that I can lay in bed and do a lot of work, and I can be productive. And that makes me feel empowered, that I can lay on my couch, you know, pull out my, my couch to make it a big day bed. And that's it. That's my workspace. Like, I will never be able to sit at a desk and do a nine to five. But I know where my strengths are. And I've found that I can be more useful to the world and myself in the comfort of my own home, and I do like getting out and about and seeing people as well. But that has not been really a thing of these restrictions. So yeah.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah, absolutely. It definitely answers it. Um, yeah, I definitely relate to you know, you have to give up like your old life when you get really sick and stuff starts to happen. And so I definitely relate to sort of when lockdown occurred. I was kind of prepared because I stay in my house. [laughing]. I stay in my house and I work from my bed as well. So big relate there. And, yeah, I also like to get out and see people, but I think the few times I've come out this year it's been to your house [both laughing].

**Leilani/Liv**

So but it's um, quality, not quantity, huh? Yeah, I think every time I've socialized this year, it's I've seen you [more laughing]. Okay, lastly, we'll talk about the initiative that just came into being that but that you've told me about the years prior. This is a dream of yours. I'm so excited to see it becoming a reality. I hope I say it right, but "Wuurn of Kanak". Can you tell us a little bit about that?

**Arika Waulu**

Yes. So maybe four weeks ago, a month ago now? Um actually on my birthday! It's going to be easy to remember that [laughter]. I launched Wuurn of Kanak. 'Wuurn' means 'home', or 'house' and 'Kanak' is 'digging stick' in my language. And the initiative is a buyback initiative. It's the only one in the country that I know of. And it is basically, I set up a GoFundMe to raise funds to be able to buy back land so that we can regenerate it.

**Arika Waulu**

So paddocks I'm looking at, hopefully some water, regenerate the water system, whatever is there. Set up a seed library, you know, a camping ground, just spaces that is going to enable healing and cultural practice. Yeah, so yeah, I guess I was, you know, this is, you know, this has really been fast tracked because of being locked down. This initiative, I wasn't going to launch until March next year, which is not too far away now. But I did fast track it because coming out of lockdown. I just thought I just knew how devastated our people were. Being in contact by phone conversations with numerous people all over the state - sorry - who, but also particularly in urban areas.

**Arika Waulu**

A lot of mob who were oppressed by the restrictions, because we weren't able to go and myself, we weren't able to get back to the bush to recharge. Which is what a lot of mob do. We have to get back, get out of the city and recharge. You have to go. You know, and that's really a human thing. It's not really a mob thing. But us blackfellas really, a lot of us do practice that. And the ones who aren't, you know, are really suffering. So yeah, this has something to do with that. You know, it kind of maybe triggered, not kind of, I should say it's triggered a re-dispossession, it's triggered a dispossession or redispossession of country that I think has caused mental health issues deeply among people in our community at the moment.

**Arika Waulu**

With you know, we've been extremely dispossessed from our homelands. And yeah the restrictions have been some kind of a trigger of that. Being restricted from your homelands. So I guess it's, it's really being fast tracked, I have been dreaming the Wuurn of Kanak for about four years, maybe a bit longer. It's kind of come in stages throughout my life, but it's been, you know, it's become clearer and clearer over the years, particularly in the last four years.

**Arika Waulu**

So and this is where it's at. So I'm really wanting to be able to set up a place to remedy the country. A place, you know, remedy as much land and waters as possible. The paddocks are turning to deserts now. It's so devastated that they're not usable to the farmer anymore. They've used it and they're, you know, they're disposing, disposing of it as well. They're not. They don't know how to value the land anymore because they've destroyed so much. We need an opportunity to remedy what's been broken and made sick. Yeah.

**Leilani/Liv**

I think that's so incredible. I mean, there's no words. It's revolutionary and necessary. And you're so right. The restrictions deeply disproportionately impacted Indigenous and Black people. If for those who aren't aware, maybe you're listening from somewhere that isn't so called Melbourne. But we had pretty hardcore restriction rules, including a five kilometre radius?

A five kilometre area from our homes that we weren't allowed to pass, otherwise, you would get thousands of dollars in fines. And even when that got knocked, there was the 25 kilometer rule. So still, you know, people can't get back to the country. Now, we could sit here all day and talk about the many failings of the Dan Andrews response and how deeply racist and anti-Indigenous and awful it was, in so many ways, but I think we're out of out of time. So I would really just want to say thank you so much for sitting down with me and making time to do this. I really appreciate it. And yeah, just thank you. Would you like to say anything? Anything else?

**Arika Waulu**

No, just please, if you couldn't help raise the funds. If you don't have any funds to contribute yourself, please post and share around as much as you can. And yeah any help, any ways, means that's in people's abilities and possibilities. Yeah, please get behind this initiative. Land back initiative Wuurn of Kanak.

**Leilani/Liv**

Thank you so much. There will be little links to the GoFundMes on the website. You can Google 'Wuurn of Kanak'. It's W-U-U-R-N space O-F space K-A-NA-K. Just google First Nations Mutual Aid, and that one will come up as well. Yeah, pay the rent, and do what you can everyone, so that the responsibilities are not disproportionately given to those that shouldn't have to take it take it all on. So settlers, that's.. that's for us!

**Dean**

Hi, this is Dean from Behind Closed Doors, you're listening to Imagining Disability Justice on 3CR.

**Leilani/Liv**

So we've also seen a lot of, you know, pretty horrendous attitudes towards not just disabled people, but the elderly and older people throughout the pandemic. You know, certain attitudes of, "Oh, it's just older and sicker people that will die, so it doesn't matter. So we can go party or whatever". I think it's really interesting how deeply interconnected ageism and ableism are. Mereani, I know that your mother works in aged care. Has she had a lot of insight throughout this year? Particularly?

**Fetty Wap**

Yes, yes, my mum does work in aged care. She's been working in nursing homes for I think, well in the same nursing home for over 10 years now. And I think this year, for us, we really got to see some of like, the cracks that kind of burst open during the pandemic. And, you know, in particular, like, PPE was, I think, something that is so important for a lot of hospital workers and nursing home staff and something that they didn't really have access to.

**Mereani**

And so, I know early on, I had to personally send my mum masks because they weren't provided them at her workplace. And, you know, her fellow colleagues were asking or where did you get your masks and things like that? And just, I don't know, I think just being really concerned for my mum and her workplace because it is one of these high risk locations and not having the proper equipment to protect themselves and also protect the residents and so, yeah, I think I just think the way that people talk about aged care homes and the elderly community really showed how much we disregard them.

**Mereani**

So I'm not sure if this is like a Pacific Islander thing where we grow up really honoring and sort of like respecting our elders. And we have a lot of families that have like, you know, multiple generations within like the one household. But um, sometimes there's this like attitude of just, you know, after you leave the home, you sort of forget about your parents. And so I don't know, I just um, yeah, I just wanted to share those things. That um, yeah.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah, absolutely. I think that's really like something important to bring up is like in Western culture, this attitude of towards the elderly, the ageism, that you see, it's not so much seen in Pacific Islander cultures and many other cultures, where it's just the natural path is to, like, everyone takes care of each other, and takes care of elders and everything.

**Mereani**

Yeah, and I think just also like for the workers, what, like people working in nursing homes as well, I mean, you know, my mum wasn't born here in Australia, she's from Fiji. And like her, there are so many other people who are from foreign countries that work in nursing homes, and I was just worried about the attitudes towards the people working in nursing homes that, you know, people would think, “Oh, you know, the workers aren't taking proper care of residents”, but I think it's important to note that they are like personal carers, and they're not doctors, or nurses.

And so, you know, they aren't trained with that sort of high level of knowledge about Coronavirus. And I know for my mum and a lot of her friends, they really felt at times they were unprepared and uneducated in some of the things and say they were concerned for their health and safety to working at a nursing home. Yeah, and so that was one thing that I was just like, freaking out about for my mom.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah.

**Mereani**

Okay, so our next interview is with Tricia Maloney. And I hope you find it all insightful, as she talks about aged care.

**Tricia Maloney**

Hi, my name is Tricia Maloney. I'm 67 years old, and I'm proud to call myself a woman with a disability. I have visible and invisible disabilities. I'm on the board of Western Health and Scope Australia, and I'm the president of Women with Disabilities Australia, I run a successful consultancy, and I provide support and advice to people with disabilities, support and advice to government and non government agency and I do a bit of work in the family violence sector. So it keeps me fairly busy. I would like to start by acknowledging the Disability advocates and activists and our allies who have gotten us to where we are today. Without them, we would not have the rights we now enjoy. Having said that, there is still a long way to go.

**Pauline**

We know that people aged 70 years and over are at greater risk of more serious illness from COVID-19. Could you give us an overview of what you know about how this pandemic has impacted older Australians with disabilities?

**Tricia Maloney**

When there’s a person with a disability who's getting towards 70, it's been a major concern of mine and I have been looking at it fairly closely. I have been looking at, in my connections, both with Scope and with Western Health, to ensure that the older people with disabilities are included within the treatment plans to make sure that they do get access to the same services. Having said that, I think that there hasn't been very much work done on this. Anybody who's over 70 is at greater risk. And if you have a disability, of course, you've got the compounding nature of these things. So people with disabilities are more likely to have chronic illnesses, for example. So there is a worry, I think the bigger worry is that nobody's collecting the data on it.

**Pauline**

Can you tell us what the pandemic has shown us about both aged care and disability care and how the problems with both overlap?

**Tricia Maloney**

Well actually it's been really interesting that the disability sector in relation to those who provide disability services generally has done so much better than the aged care sector. The disability sector went in straight away. And this is people who are living in group homes or receiving programs, state aid programs and things like that. So people with high support needs. They are actually better off than others because they didn't allow people to work across sites. They had PPE coming straight away even though they weren't provided initially with enough PPE, the disability service providers actually went out and found their own ways of getting around.

**Tricia Maloney**

But the aged care sector has problems because it's still using the medical model. So the disability model is the social model, which means that it's about making sure that people have the supports they need to live the life they want to live with. We know that in the aged care sector, there's more of a tendency to have congregate care, so people all living in the same place. And I think that's been a problem. The other problem is that we've had people working across multiple sites in the aged care sector.

**Tricia Maloney**

And they weren’t stopping them doing that soon enough, they didn't have proper PPA in place. And I think the other problem is that we know that in fact, the disability sector and in the aged care centres, it's very low wages. And so I'm not sure that people have been able to not work across multiple sites without support. So that's the two institutionalized models.

**Tricia Maloney**

The other concern that I've had is people living in their own homes who need PPE for example, I have support workers coming into their homes. And I know the people I've spoken to who ‘ve told me that they've had support workers coming into their house, and they haven't had any pay period. And they've been told “well it's okay, you're only seeing that one person. So you actually don't need PPE”. Which is actually ridiculous, because that person who is providing the services is actually going from site to site. So they’re the problem, not the person with the disability.

**Tricia Maloney**

And one of my colleagues is actually having to purchase his own PPE, just to make sure that that isn't a problem. With the deaths of people with disabilities, from COVID, to my knowledge there’s been 8, and none of those have been in proper disability service providers, they’ve been in places like aged care, so younger people in aged care. And the other one has been people who are living in boarding houses, so people with disabilities who are not getting the supports they need and are living in inappropriate accommodation. I hope that's interesting for people to know.

**Pauline**

Thank you. It really is it's really illuminating. Finally, what are some things younger, disabled people and non disabled people as well do to be better allies to elders with disabilities?

**Tricia Maloney**

Look, this is something that I've been thinking about a lot, because, as I say, I'm 67. I'm getting older, I'm nearly there myself. I think that we have to transform the age sector, to be quite honest. So we work very hard. And we've had some champions, as I mentioned earlier, who come along, who actually helped to transform the disability sector from a medical model to a social model. Australia was at the forefront of that with people like Frank Hall-Bentick and Leslie Hall, doing some work at the UN to develop the Convention of the Rights of People with Disabilities. But I think that we actually need to transform the aged care sector in from a medical model to a social model.

**Tricia Maloney**

And that includes people with disabilities who are older. Their rights need to be upheld. I really think the problem isn't with older people with disabilities, I think it's the age care sector completely. I think that it's probably time for some of the younger people with disabilities, and our allies to actually step up and start agitating for changes in the age care sector, and using our people with disabilities who are older.

**Tricia Maloney**

I think there's a sort of, it's joining with older people. So it almost seems like there's an ageism where people with disabilities who are older are no longer active. And I think I know so many who are over 70, who still have voices. And we just need to ensure that it's their voices that are amplified, but using the tactics that were used in the 70s and 80s to get us where we are today. And perhaps even the tactics of the NDIS. You know, making sure that we write to politicians and say this isn't fair, we need a better model for everybody.

**Pauline**

So next up we're going to hear from Vermilion Project.

**Tori**

My name is Tori, my pronouns are they/them.

**Swathi**

My name is Swathi, my pronouns are she/her. Yeah so, I'm one of the cofounders of The Vermilion Project and the director, and the Vermilion Project was really born out of, I suppose, the collective frustrations of Tori and I’s lived experiences when it comes to our experiences with invisible illness and employment. Quite simply, our mission is to promote the social and economic participation of people affected by invisible illnesses. And that wasn’t a complete statement that we came to overnight. But it was sort of a labour of love, really, and a lot of brainstorming between the two of us as to what we really, really wanted to achieve because of everything we've been through.

**Swathi**

The backstory to that is, I suppose I was at quite a difficult point in my life, when I was going through uni. I’m a qualified lawyer and was going through law school and really struggling I suppose, because I go through suffering from debilitating periods of pain when I menstruate, and found it quite difficult to get through not only my degree, but also started to find that workplaces were relatively inaccessible to people who suffered not just from something like period pain, but from any form of chronic or invisible illness really, and found myself in a really precarious situation when it came to my mental health and my physical health and going through a really complicated journey of getting on a path to finding a diagnosis, I suppose.

**Swathi**

And it was during that time that I came across an old Facebook post that Tori had made about how they've been through a very similar experience. And I reached out to Tori just randomly, I hadn't spoken to Tori, so we actually went to high school together, and hadn't spoken to each other since leaving high school. And I reached out to them. And said, “you know, I'm going through a really difficult time. But thank you so much for sharing your journey. It really meant something to me”. And to my surprise, Tori replied and said, you know, “just talk to me whenever you need to, you know, I totally understand what you're going through”. And just offered me the support that I never really got from anyone else. And Tori, do you want to continue on that?

**Tori**

Yeah, so, um, yes. Swathi and I went to high school together, and sort of throughout high school, I was kind of known as that person with really weird periods. And it was like a running joke with me and my friends. And I don't know if Swathi knew that at the time. But like, after we left school, I still continued to sort of suffer with all this pain and bleeding and all these terrible sort of symptoms of underlying illness, which at the time I didn't know was illness, I just thought was normal. So then I went on to start working as a nurse. And working through nursing, I realized that my endometriosis wasn't quite matching up to my expectations of what my bosses wanted me to do at work and what my managers were expecting of me. And I found myself really struggling to perform in the workplace to the standard that I needed to as a registered nurse and found myself in pain during shifts and everything.

**Tori**

So yeah, Swathi reached out to me and was like, "let's, let's start doing something about it". So that's where the Vermillion Project started.

**Swathi**

Exactly. And I mean, um, it's interesting, because from me reaching out to Tori, and like creating that sense of connection, and recognizing that I wasn't alone in experiencing what I was experiencing. And then us actually coming to the idea of starting the Vermillion Project was actually a year apart, like I went through a year of like, just going through a whole bunch of problems, and fighting with the workplace that I was in at the time, until I came to the realization that a lot of industries are inaccessible for people with invisible illnesses and chronic illnesses.

**Swathi**

And that's just an injustice that I was no longer willing to put up with, especially as someone you know, as a person of color, who already felt like there were a lot of different barriers. This was like, one more thing that happened that I was just super frustrated by it. And then to know that someone like Tory was so willing and ready to share that experience and do something with everything that we had been through was just really invaluable.

**Swathi**

Yeah, that's why we started off. And we had a very, very deliberate focus on wanting to channel these experiences into focusing specifically on employment and economic empowerment, and encouraging people to talk about these things in social settings in a really, really comfortable way. Because being people of color and coming from the backgrounds that we do we know that a lot of there's a lot of cultural nuance when it comes to conversations around menstrual health, reproductive health, an invisible illness that a lot of people in the space miss out on and it becomes sort of not inclusive to everyone and we want to at every step of the way, make sure we're being inclusive.

**Pauline**

What do you think the pandemic has revealed about disabled and ill workers and the way society values them?

**Tricia Maloney**

Um, I think quite simply.... One of the ways we like to say this is that, when the way you work or the amount of labour that you can perform directly impacts on your employer's bottom line. Um, you know, there are changes that can be made and things are possible. But then when you're no longer able to contribute at the level of your peers, then all your productivity is challenged in any sort of way because of an invisible illness or a disability. And when your personal livelihood and ability to live is at stake, things just aren't possible. So I think a lot of the disabled community, people with chronic illnesses, people who have been asking for flexibility and accessibility for a long time, have looked at what's happened with COVID-19.

**Swathi**

And not- I mean, just collectively rolled their eyes [laughing] and become very angry at the level of flexibility that we've seen industries, sort of create the spaces that they've created, the innovation that has happened to make sure their work forces can be included, and that they can keep going. And it's frustrating, because I worked in the legal industry. And my experience was that, to put it quite bluntly, I had requested flexible adjustments so that I could menstruate with a bit of dignity going through a lot of the painful and quite difficult symptoms that I was experiencing at the time, things like pain, um, whole mental health issues, you know, severity with bleeding, lots of really different things that you don't want to go through in front of people.

**Swathi**

For people who go through those sorts of things within invisible illnesses related to menstrual health is that there are different levels of productivity, there are different ways that you can still be able to work and participate in the job that you're doing. But it's- there's a lot of rigidness, there's a lot of opposition to providing any sort of accessibility or flexibility when it comes to making those things happen. And then, of course, COVID-19 happened. And we saw a lot of those industries, we've been through a lot of opposition before, all of a sudden say, “hey, you can all work from home, look at how innovative we’re beingthis is amazing. And it's an insult, like it's a really, really big slap in the face.

**Swathi**

And I think Tory and I used to talk about this earlier on as well before COVID-19. Part of our work is speaking to other people who've been through similar things to better understand how they can be better supported in work and in keeping the jobs that they have. Because we both recognize that one of the biggest problems for people going through invisible illnesses related to menstrual health is that they were either accepting lesser forms of the jobs that they had, that they were either accepting pay cuts, or willing to accept any form of just lesser value, despite being really really talented individuals. Because they just want to just like that little bit of flexibility in order to go to work with or keep their jobs with a bit of dignity.

**Swathi**

And a lot of the stigma attached to illnesses around menstruation are such that people don't want to talk about it. And employers can take advantage of that vulnerability and of that stigma and especially if you're a person of colour, who's grown up with a lot of those inbuilt issues and those those cultural nuances that you have to unlearn, in the context of employment in Australia, you are going to be left behind and employers have every reason to exploit every weakness that they can find. And, you know, we've been finding that a lot of people don't recognize this or they recognize it too late, and they end up leaving an industry or a really great job that they loved. Because they've had to go through all of those painful things, only to say, “Okay, now I'm going to take all of this and really stand up for myself” and it's just it's not acceptable.

**Pauline**

I agree. Um, final question, in your opinion, how can we create communities that value chronically ill people?

**Tricia Maloney**

I think the first step towards sort of creating a community that values people who are chronically ill is to, sort of dismantle the institutions that work to keep us down in the first place, like, spare like spaces that promised understanding like hospitals and schools and workplaces, in their, you know, in their ethos and their values. You know, they're all about diversity. But when it actually comes down to it, when they're hiring people with disabilities, they often deliver the opposite. They expect you to conform and sort of, work to the standards that they want, but they have absolutely no ability to sort of, you know, be a bit flexible, when it comes to what your abilities actually are.

**Tori**

So I think the system that sort of claim to serve our population needs to do better, and actually deliver what they promise. And it's really hard because I think people with disabilities, sort of very much get used to being disappointed. When we experience symptoms, we're often not heard by our doctors and our peers and our families. So we’re disappointed, we sometimes get diagnoses that we didn't really predict or weren't expecting. So we feel disappointed in ourselves for being ill in the first place. And then when you try to do all the things that are considered normal, like working, engaging with people in a social capacity, building relationships, you're often undervalued by the people that are meant to be there to support you, whether that be your families, or your boss, or whoever it may be.

**Tori**

So being undervalued, every step of the way, sort of sets a precedence of being disappointed, which I think we sort of have to stand up and say, no, that that is not the standard that we're willing to accept. And obviously, Disability Justice has come a long, long, long, long way, in the past couple of decades. But I feel like the pandemic has kind of brought to light, a lot of things that you know, that our lives in the eyes of the state are kind of seen as disposable, which is definitely not the way that it should be. So for community to value us, they need to, like, just value the fact that we're human beings, and we're alive.

**Tori**

And we deserve to, you know, be here if we want to, and we need funding for the projects and the initiatives and hospitals that are meant to be there to care and serve us. And we need a major overhaul in the way that we just view and educate other people about disability as well. And with that comes educating about accessibility, providing accessible like public and online spaces. And we need sort of the access of choice and compassion rather than, sort of the policing of our lives pretty much. And I feel like the hospital system has received heaps of praise this year.

**Tori**

And as someone who, who's worked in the hospital system, I know that I personally have had a really hard time with working during the pandemic. So I understand that, you know, we have done a lot of work to sort of, help our community. But at the same time, we are institutions where we sort of, rank the lives of people and decide who's disposable and who's not. And that whole idea just completely needs to change. Like in order to truly value the lives of disabled and chronically ill people, we need to work towards the goal of abolition of the systems that work to, you know, keep us imprisoned essentially, and take away our agency.

**Swathi**

Yeah, absolutely. Look there's a really big conversation in there about what diversity and inclusion means going forward for industries across the board. I think that there was a really blatant level of tokenism and just really blatant exploitation of the opportunities presented by diversity and inclusion, which became such a buzzword in a lot of legal and sorry, in a lot of industries, and especially in an industry like the legal industry. Where people like to throw praise on anyone who does any form of diversity inclusion initiative. But a lot of us know that sometimes that can look like something as simple as just hiring people of colour, let alone people with disabilities, or it can, an inclusion initiative could very easily be stopped at making sure that working mothers were adequately included in the workforce, but not people with disabilities.

**Swathi**

There's a conversation in there to be had around, you know, whether they're being progressive, whether those feminist initiatives, whether those diversity and inclusion initiatives were truly inclusive. And I think after this year, there's a really, really big role that ally ship has to play. And we need to collectively be demanding better of industries and have any sort of initiatives that come about when it comes to actually creating communities that are truly inclusive of people with disabilities and chronic illnesses. And we need to do a much better job at educating ourselves and adopting and promoting the social model of disability across the board.

**Pauline**

Amazing. Thank you. Where can people find the Vermilion Project?

**Tricia Maloney**

Yeah, so you can find, follow and like and share the Vermilion Project on social media. So on Facebook, we're just @thevermilionproject with one ‘l’. Instagram @thevermilionproject with one ‘l’ again and we've also got our website www.vermilionproject.com.

**Pauline**

Swathi and Tori, thank you.

**Fetty Wap**

RGF productions / Remy Boyz, yah-ah / 1738, ay.

I'm like hey, wassup, hello

Seen yo pretty ass soon as you came in the door

I just wanna chill, got a sack for us to roll

Married to the money, introduced her to my stove

Showed her how to whip it now she remix it for low

She my trap queen let her hit the bando

We be counting up watch how far them bands go

We just set a goal, talking matching lambos

Got 56 a gram, 5 a hundred grams though

Man I swear I love her how she work that damn pole

Hit the strip club we be letting bands go

Everybody hating we just call them fans though

In love with the money I ain't never letting go

And I get high with my baby

I just left the mall I'm getting fly with my baby, yeahh

And I can ride with my baby

I be in the kitchen cooking pies with my baby, yeahh

And I can ride with my baby

I just left the mall I'm getting fly with my baby, yeahh

And I can ride with my baby I be in the kitchen cooking pies

I'm like, "Hey, what's up? Hello" I hit the strip with my trap queen

'Cause all we know is bands

I might just snatch up a 'Rari'

And buy my boo a Lamb'

I might just snatch her a necklace

Drop a couple on a ring

She ain't wantin' for nothin’

Because I got her everything

It's BigZooWap from the bando

Remind me where I can't go

Remy Boyz got the stamp though

Count up hella them bands though

Boy how far can your bands go?

Fetty Wap I'm living fifty thousand K how I stand tho

If you checking for my pockets I'm like

And I get high with my baby

I just left the mall I'm getting fly with my baby, yeahh

And I can ride with my baby

I be in the kitchen cooking pies with my baby, yeahh

And I can ride with my baby I just left the mall I'm getting fly with my baby, yeahh

And I can ride with my baby I be in the kitchen cooking pies I'm like hey, wassup, hello

Seen yo pretty ass soon as you came in the door

I just wanna chill, got a sack for us to roll

Married to the money, introduced her to my stove

Showed her how to whip it now she remix it for low

She my trap queen let her hit the bando

We be counting up watch how far them bands go

We just set a goal, talking matching lambos

Got 56 a gram, 5 a hundred grams though

Man I swear I love her how she work that damn pole

Hit the strip club we be letting bands go

Everybody hating we just call them fans though

In love with the money I ain't never letting go

I be smoking dope and you know Backwoods what I roll

Remy Boy, Fetty eating shit up that's fasho

I'll run in ya house, then I'll fuck ya ho

'Cause Remy boyz or nothin', Re-Re-Remy Boyz or nothin’

Yeah, you hear my boy

Soundin' like a zillion bucks on the track

I got whatever on my boy, whatever

Put your money where your mouth is

Money on the wood make the game go good

Money out of sight 'cause fights

Put up or shut up, huh?

Nitt Da Gritt, huh, RGF Productions Squad

**Swathi and Tori**

Thank you

**Leilani/Liv**

And that was "Trap Queen" by Fetty Wap. Pauline asked us to think about songs by disabled artists and so I chose "Trap Queen" by Fetty Wap because... let's be honest, it's an absolute banger.

**Mereani**

Yeah.

**Leilani/Liv**

And yeah, he's an incredible disabled artist. He lost his, one of his eyes as a result of congenital glaucoma. He has it in both. But he lost one of his eyes. And yeah, it's just incredible to see disabled artists out there, like doing amazing things and making amazing tunes. And I was reading about him and he said, like that, you know, he used to have a prosthetic eye that he would wear. But slowly as he became older and grew up and became more comfortable with his disability. One day, he was just like, "I'm never wearing this again". And he took it out. So that's just so cool to me. Yeah.

**Mereani**

Awesome. Love to hear that. Yeah.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah.

**Pauline**

Actually, last year, I played Curtis Mayfield and, like, not many people know that he was, he became a quadriplegic.

**Mereani**

Wow!

**Leilani/Liv**

I forgot! That's right. You played "Moving On Up". Oh, my God that's true.

**Mereani**

That's a great song too.

**Leilani/Liv**

Ugh, so good.

**Fetty Wap**

Yeah, I think there were so many artists that we know about, but we don't know about the conditions that they have and that they've lived with. Yeah, and sometimes if you just delve a little bit farther, you can always find something new.

**Pauline**

It's so true, but you know what I was actually, qhen I was thinking about things to play, I had like a playlist of all these different artists. And I had to recently remove Sia from the playlist.

**Fetty Wap**

Oh my gosh, please don't.

**Leilani/Liv**

I know! I know. Just replace it with all Gaga.

**Pauline**

Do you want to talk about Crip Camp?

**Leilani/Liv**

Yes, I'll talk about Crip Camp. So, um, for those of you who haven't seen Crip Camp or heard of it, it is on Netflix. So you do need a Netflix account. But it is a documentary film that was released in 2020, but is made up of a lot of footage from the 70s from 1971. So it's about a camp called Camp Jened. It's kind of like outside of New York. And it was basically this like, it's described as like a loose, free spirited camp, designed for teens with disabilities. So it was completely run by hippies. And it's something that, you know, kind of changed the world a little bit, or at least changed America in a very fundamental way. It was such a beautiful viewing experience, to see just so many disabled people at once, in one setting, and to be like openly communicating about things they experience and validating that for each other.

**Leilani/Liv**

It was also cool, because, like, the majority of the counselors at the camp were also disabled. So it was really just, you know, disabled people taking care of each other in the 70s. And like, smoking weed and like making music and you know, becoming radicalised basically. It's an incredible watch. And not only does it follow the story of the camp, and what, you know, their memories and the the kinds of like, liberation they experienced during that time period. But it also follows many of the disabled people who attended that camp and became friends for life and their journey into becoming radical activists and the things they achieved later.

**Leilani/Liv**

Which blew my mind, the things I did, you know, sit ins that lasted like 23 days inside municipal buildings, and these are people with, you know, severe illness stuff going on putting, putting themselves through incredible feats of sacrifice and of, you know, physical discomfort to make sure that buildings, public transport, schools, education, could be accessible to Americans, to all Americans. So I would really, really encourage everyone to check it out. It's an incredible watch. And if you don't have the time to do that, or you don't have a Netflix account. You can research the 504 sit in, which began on April 5 1977, and was organised by many, many of the attendees of Crip Camp or Camp Jened. Yeah, it's pretty cool. Pretty cool.

**Pauline**

Yeah, I am going to watch it this summer. I've got a whole like a list of things that I'm going to watch from the year I didn't while in lockdown because my brain just couldn't cope with taking anything in really. So I'm looking forward to watching that over the holidays. But um, does the film go into like the relationship between the Black Panthers and the disability [inaudible]?

**Leilani/Liv**

Yes, it does! Ugh thank you for reminding me. That was the most amazing, beautiful, like, footage of the sit in occurring and the Panthers coming. The reason that you know, the sit in was able to go on for so long is because of the Panthers. Because the Panthers would come every day and make sure that there was food to have and there was a lot of other support from different groups as well. Like you know, someone would know someone and who had a nurse friend and then the nurse would come because the people who had been at the sit-in would be like "we're just sick of being dirty like please" like, you know, they couldn't shower inside the building.

**Leilani/Liv**

The government had turned off the hot water and things like that. So there was a lot of like mutual aid and cross solidarity happening. But yeah, what a joy to witness like these radical disabled activists and the Black Panthers working together just beautiful, beautiful scenes. Also, there was an incredible virtual Crip Camp this year that literally went for 15 weeks. It was amazing. I attended a couple of the events obviously some, like the majority are outside of our timezone because it's American based, but you can still go online to like, I think just google Crip Camp. It'll come up with all the sort of resources that you can still flip through. You can sign up to the newsletter and things. So that next year, for Crip Camp 2021, you'll be able to attend some events, I attended some and I just was, you know, emotional the whole day in my room just so happy and living my best disabled life. So yeah, definitely worth checking out the virtual stuff too.

**Jane Rosengrave**

My name is Jane Rosengrave, and you're listening to a Yorta Yorta, strong, powerful woman on Disability Day! On 3CR.

**Pauline**

I actually wanted to ask both of you. I think all three of us are people who, because of our disabilities, we have to spend a lot of time at home.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yes.

**Pauline**

And so we are experts at living that life, living the shutdown without the shutdown. I wonder, like what you thought of the world opening up this year, in ways that, you know, we've always used the internet and media to connect with the outside world with other people with each other. But it's so weird seeing the world open. I think Ricky was talking about it earlier in their interview, like the world opening up all of a sudden, in ways that, you know, we really could have used that quite a while ago.

**Mereani**

Mm hmm. Um,

**Pauline**

I wonder how you felt about that?

**Mereani**

Yeah, I think for me, personally, I don't know, it was quite a strange feeling. I think one thing, not not so much about like, the world opening up in terms of like, accessibility, but like, just before that happened, how people were having events canceled and having to go through, like, disappointment and, and anger and feeling like, you know, a loss of, you know, their sense of self and identity, and, you know, losing jobs. I think all of that. I think in some ways there was this, I don't know, like, I don't want to say that "oh, you know, sucks for you, because I had to go through this alone". But yeah, it was kind of that feeling of like "wow, I had to do this all by myself".

**Mereani**

No one understood my emotions that I was going through. My experiences were told that they were invalid. It was kind of like, suck it up. Just, you know, keep going on and put on a brave face and that sort of thing. So, when people were like, "Oh, this is canceled, and this is not going on, and I don't know why this happened". For me, it was like, well, I've had to go through that many times before and just being told to, you know, put up with it. And yeah, I think it was it was in a way. I don't know, I just I don't know, how would you describe it? I don't know if this makes sense to both of you. But yeah, what do you think? I didn't know? I always felt bad for feeling this kind of way. Because I don't want to feel the sort of emotions towards other people. Like "Yeah, screw you. Because, you know, now you know how it feels, but um-"

**Leilani/Liv**

They still don't, oh my god! Um no, your feelings are valid [laughing].

**Mereani**

Yes, exactly! Yeah! But it was almost like they got a glimpse into my life for the very first time that perhaps they would understand that this is the life that me and many other people live on a day to day basis. And perhaps this would be that moment where their eyes, you know, are opened up to our world.

**Leilani/Liv**

Narrator: They did not.

**Mereani**

Yeah, that's how I felt. [laughter] And what a brief moment it was.

**Leilani/Liv**

[laughter] Yeah, I feel totally the same, like um, yeah, it sucks to feel, you know, bitter. Like a bitter hermit. That is scolding the masses. But yeah, that's not really what it is like. Like... what am I trying to say? I really would have hoped that, um, more people had, yeah. Opened themselves up to listening more to the disabled community. And I thought that was such a good opportunity when lockdown started. I remember the relief I felt and the guilt I felt about the relief that I felt about everyone having to go into lockdown because I felt like people would... well, first, I felt that it would benefit people to have a little bit of a break. And obviously, that is not how it was across the board.

**Leilani/Liv**

Like there are many people that don't have the privilege of having a break and have to work. Shift work as essential work is. But for those that were forced to stay home, for long periods, the way that we usually are doing, I thought maybe it would really help people reflect on their energy and time and how they're having to give so much of it to work. And like for what? You know. And I really hoped that that would be more reflection, and more listening.

**Leilani/Liv**

But I don't know if that really did happen. I don't know even the the inclusive stuff and the accessible stuff that happened ,all of the zoom events. I don't think really that, that was for us. It was like they couldn't go to gigs, so they had to come up with something to entertain themselves. And it would have been so lovely if there had been a little more thinking beyond their sole experiences of how hard it's been. And "oh my god, an this is "people aren't meant to live like this!". And "oh my god, my mental health!". It's like... we we've been living like this for many, many years. And this is how it is.

**Mereani**

Yeah, oh my gosh, yeah, I remember, Pauline, you made a tweet. And it was about this a guy called Jonathan who was in quarantine. So I don't know who Jonathan is. But he was like, "wow, you know, guys, I've been in quarantine for four days and my mental health. It's just like, appalling like, I'm going through it!". And I just had the biggest laugh of my life. Like, wow, Jonathan four days. Some people have been doing this for 14 years. And um, you just want to be like, "suck it up, Jonathan, far out."

**Mereani**

But, you know, one thing that I found that many people have lacked is compassion. Like I don't know, just in the way that we treat each other. And I think if one thing Coronavirus, and this whole pandemic has taught us is that how interconnected our lives are, and how much one life impacts another. So when you make changes for disabled and chronically ill communities, it's not just benefiting us. It's benefiting everyone. And I think that's so important to know that this isn't just one community and making it, you know, good for us. And so things can be better for us. But it really does help everyone. And I hope people understand that. And know that.

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah, I really hope so too. And I hope that there were many non disabled people that might have gone into quarantine, thinking, "Oh, my God, I have to use this time to be really productive, or I'm going to lose, like my edge and oh my god, I better keep myself active. And otherwise I'll put on weight and won't be beautiful or whatever come out of quarantine, blah, blah, blah". I hope that, you know, people that went into quarantine with that mindset of those kinds of notions of ableism and fatphobia that was seen a lot on Twitter, these pressures have to be extremely productive and on top of everything, I hope that some people got to the end of the eight month lockdown with deeper insights on like, how damaging that is for the human soul and just found more, found something else... deeper.

**Leilani/Liv**

And I think, you know, as a cynical disabled person who is sad a lot of the time, I can be a little negative sometimes about what I'm seeing and what the general consensus is. But I think I'm still really glad that this lockdown happened. Because even if I can't see it now, I think that is it is one tiny, small step in moving towards a time where people will be like, "well do we have to go to work five days a week and do all of this and like, work until we die until our bodies are broken? Maybe we don't have to? Remember when we just... were in our houses?" [laughter]

**Leilani/Liv**

Yeah, maybe it gives people a little glimpse of like, what could be just like that slow life? Maybe we can slow down, and maybe that would be better for all of us.

**Mereani**

Yeah, that's right. I think like, during the lockdown, I found that many people in like my circles were using that time to reflect. And, and if they weren't working, you know, there were times when you think, "Oh, well then what is my life for? And where do I find myself worth from? Is it from my job? Is it from working? Is it? Is it um, you know, from my career? And you know, if I don't have my career, then who am I without it?"

**Mereani**

And, you know, there are many people with different conditions, who don't work at all or who work part time and have had to experience that or have had to ask those questions like "Who am I beyond the job? And beyond the things that I do?". Yeah, that there's something deeper than just productivity. So, yeah. And then I think that comes through in the way that we treat each other as well that we aren't just treating each other to benefit the bottom line. And, you know, "what can I do for you and what can you do for me?", but we treat each other with love and respect, because everyone deserves that.

**Mereani**

And not like "what can I benefit from you", that sort of point of view, if that makes sense? Okay, for our last song. This morning, I've chosen "Cool off" by Missy Elliott. I remember hearing a few years ago that she had a condition with her thyroid and it turns out that she has graves disease. So yes, it is condition with thyroid and just the subject of the song "Cool off", we are officially in summer. And just a reminder to everyone to stay hydrated and remember to keep in well ventilated areas. Because yes, coronavirus is a respiratory condition. And yeah, open the windows, open the doors. Make sure the air flow is top notch, and here we go “Cool off” by Missy Elliott.

**Missy Elliott**

Do it, do it, do it, do it

Do it, do it, do it, do it

Do it, do it, do it, do it

Do it, do it, do it, do it

Get it, get it, get it, get it

Get it, get it, get it, get it

Get it, get it, get it, get it

Get it, get it, get it, get it

Missy in this bitch doin' shit you ain't never seen

Missy in this bitch doin' shit you ain't never seen

Get it, get it, get it, get it

Get it, get it, get it, get it

Get it, get it, get it, get it

Get it, get it, get it (Stop)

Back in this bitch

Missy hoppin' out the sunroof I got 'bout hundred coupes

Shooters with me, hundred troops

Got a hundred bands, goin' H.A.M.

We don't give a damn It go up and down, 'round and 'round

Like a ceiling fan

'Round like a ceiling fan

'Round like a ceiling fan

'Round like a ceiling fan

'Round like a ceiling fan

Cool off Cool off, cool off, cool off

Cool off, cool off, cool off

Cool off, cool off, cool off

Break a sweat, make 'em lose control, ain't no AC

Goin' hard, tempo forty-four, feel like Jay-Z

Four, feel like Jay-Z Four, feel like Jay-Z

Four, feel like Jay-Z Four, feel like Jay-Z (stop)

Do it, do it, do it, do it

Do it, do it, do it, do it

Do it, do it, do it, do it

Do it, do it, do it, do it

Cool off

Cool off, cool off, cool off

Cool off, cool off, cool off

Cool off, cool off, cool off (stop)

Play this again, I'm finna win

Finna go off, finna go in

Me and my friends, yeah, we on ten

And the song never ends, no, the song never ends

Body shaped like a fisheye lens

I'll make it drop, yeah,

I'll make it bend

Cool off 'til I feel the wind

Four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten

Way too high to get over me

Way too low to get under my skin

All the DJ's gon' hit that spin

I'ma play this again and again and again (stop)

Cool off

Woo

Cool off, woo (stop)

Woo

Cool off

Cool off, cool off, cool off

Cool off, cool off, cool off

Cool off, cool off, cool off

Do it, do it, do it, do it

Do it, do it, do it, do it

Do it, do it, do it, do it

Do it, do it, do it, do it

**Leilani/Liv**

You've been listening to Mana in the Morning with Pauline, Leilani and Mereani. Next up is Chronically Chilled. Stay tuned for much more Disability Day broadcasting, here on 3CR.