

2026-27 HIVE Summer Internship Project

Keep Your Promises: Immersive Storytelling from 900 Voices in WA Disability Education

Primary Academic Supervisor

Prof. Katie Ellis

Project Background

Square Peg Round Whole (and its WA branch) is a volunteer-run, unfunded human rights advocacy collective working to advance inclusive education and the rights of disabled young people. Its work spans individual family support, systemic advocacy, policy and law reform, and public campaigning, and it is a member of the Australian Coalition for Inclusive Education. Square Peg was a finalist in the Australian Human Rights Awards Community Award for its volunteer-led advocacy for inclusive education. In 2022, Square Peg staged a visual protest on the steps of WA Parliament using more than 500 school bags to represent students and families harmed by exclusion and discrimination in the WA education system. In November 2025, a follow-up protest, Keep Your Promises, was held with Accountability for Children in Education WA to call out the WA Government's lack of progress on years of inquiries, reviews and commitments. As part of this protest, the community contributed more than 900 physical bag tags, each carrying a short message or lived-experience story from a student, parent, educator or other community member. Together, these messages form a powerful physical record of the experiences of neurodivergent and disabled children in WA schools and while were created to be seen publicly, are now largely out of view. Square Peg has since developed a new campaign website, Keep Your Promises (www.keeppyourpromises.org), documenting WA Government commitments on disability and education reform against what has actually happened, but has not yet launched it — partly because Square Peg, an entirely volunteer and unfunded organisation, lacks the capacity and technical expertise to turn its 900+ tags into a public showcase that does justice to the people who shared them.

This creates a research and visualisation challenge: how can hundreds of individual stories be brought back into public view in ways that preserve their humanity while revealing the systemic patterns they collectively

Project Description, Expected Outputs, Possible Stretch Goals

This project will digitise, catalogue and transform Square Peg's collection of more than 900 community-contributed stories from the 2025 Keep Your Promises protest back into public view, while preserving the individuality and humanity of each contribution. + protest tags into an immersive, publicly accessible storytelling experience that connects individual lived experiences to the systemic pattern of unmet government commitments to disabled students in WA.

The student will work with the academic supervisor and Square Peg Round Whole to develop and prototype a visual approach that allows audiences to encounter individual lived experiences while also revealing patterns across the collection and their broader context of disability rights, inclusive education and government accountability in WA.

Expected outputs:

- A digitised, searchable archive of the 900+ tags (text/image capture with appropriate metadata and consent handling)
- An interactive data visualisation connecting tag content to a timeline of WA Government commitments and outcomes
- A prototype immersive/public-facing display (e.g. Tiled wall, Dome or Hologram Table) suitable for exhibition or the Keep Your Promises website
- A short demo/showcase piece communicating the emotional and systemic significance of the stories

Possible stretch goals:

- Incorporating a timeline of relevant WA Government commitments and subsequent developments.
- A VR/AR experience allowing users to 'walk through' the tags
- Geographic or thematic mapping of tag content (e.g. by school, issue type, government commitment)
- Integration of the visualisation into the live Keep Your Promises campaign website

- A physical/immersive public exhibition or parliamentary display of the work

Links to background reading and any relevant recent work in the field

- www.keepyourpromises.org — the campaign website
- WA Today — coverage of the November 2025 Keep Your Promises school-bag protest: <https://www.watoday.com.au/national/western-australia/we-need-action-school-bag-protest-tells-stories-of-wa-students-20251120-p5nh4w.html>
- Square Peg Round Whole — organisational background and inclusive-education advocacy: <https://www.squarepegroundwhole.com.au/our-protests>
- Square Peg Round Whole Australian Human Rights Commission Community Award Finalist: <https://humanrights.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/human-rights-awards-2025-archived/awards-nominee-search/2023/18765>

What type of visualisation will the student develop or produce?

The student will develop an interactive, immersive visualisation of the 900+ protest tags, allowing audiences to move between individual stories and patterns across the collection. The prototype will retain the visual character of the original tags and school-bag protest while exploring connections to the wider Keep Your Promises campaign. It will be developed for an appropriate HIVE display, such as the Tiled wall or Dome, with the final format refined with HIVE staff.

How will the visualisation contribute to your research outcomes?

The visualisation will investigate how a large collection of lived-experience stories can be represented at scale without losing the individuality and humanity of each contribution. It will explore how audiences can move between individual experiences and collective patterns, contributing to CCAT and CHRE research on digital inclusion, disability rights and accessible human rights communication, while generating new approaches to visualising community testimony.

If the project is successful, where would you consider publishing the results?

Potential outlets include Disability & Society, Media International Australia and the Journal of Sociology, plus conference presentations (e.g. IAMCR Disability and Accessibility Taskforce, ICA Disability Communications Division), alongside a public-facing showcase/report for Square Peg Round Whole and government stakeholders.

Draft Project Timeline:

Week 1

Nov 16 - Full day HIVE induction

Nov 17 - Area and Project Induction with Primary supervisor

Develop project plan with HIVE and academic team

Literature and relevant project review

Project Familiarisation

Week 2

Review the physical tag collection with Square Peg; establish a digitisation and cataloguing workflow; begin a literature/precedent review of protest-object and testimony visualisation projects.

Week 3

Review the physical tag collection with Square Peg; establish a digitisation and cataloguing workflow; begin a literature/precedent review of protest-object and testimony visualisation projects.

Week 4

Concept development for the visualisation approach; initial wireframes/prototypes; feedback from supervisor and Square Peg.

Week 5

Build the first working prototype of the interactive/immersive visualisation.

Week 6

Continue development; test with a sample of the dataset; refine narrative and interaction design.

Week 7

User testing and feedback from supervisor, Square Peg and the HIVE team; refine the prototype.

Week 8

Finalise the prototype; plan the integration pathway with the Keep Your Promises campaign website.

Week 9

Focus on report writing and presentation (including demo) preparation

Week 10

*Focus on report writing and presentation (including demo) preparation
5th Feb Final Showcase Day and final report due*

Student Experience and Supervision:

How often will you meet with the student over the 10-week period?

Once per week minimum, with additional check-ins involving Square Peg Round Whole around key milestones.

Your work desk location and the location of student desk

we have potential desk space in both building 208 or 209 depending on suitability

Student Attributes:

Please indicate any preference for student's academic discipline or field of study

Design, Digital Media/Interaction Design, Data Visualisation, Human-Computer Interaction, Communication/Media or Computer Science — interdisciplinary interest welcome.

What competencies are required to start this project

Beginner - Video production/editing

Beginner - 3D modelling software (Blender, 3ds Max)

Beginner - Game engine development (Unity, Unreal. Godot, etc.)

Beginner - Virtual Reality Development (rendering pipelines, scene content design, interaction)

Beginner - AI Integrations (build tools to assist with custom workflows)

Beginner - UX/interaction design

Intermediate - 2D art/editing

Intermediate - Data structures, analytics, statistical modelling

Intermediate - storytelling / narrative design

Do you have any other student attributes you think are important to the project?

Sensitivity and discretion in handling personal, sometimes distressing lived-experience content; genuine interest in human rights, disability and social justice; strong collaborative and communication skills for working closely with a community advocacy group.