



**THE HON BILL SHORTEN
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
MEMBER FOR MARIBYRNONG**

**THE HON JENNY MACKLIN MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR FAMILIES & PAYMENTS
SHADOW MINISTER FOR DISABILITY REFORM
MEMBER FOR JAGAJAGA**

We were deeply saddened to learn of the sudden death of Stella Young.

Last month, *The Age* published a letter Stella had penned to her 80-year old self.

In it, Stella reflected on the epiphany she had at 17:

"I was not wrong for the world I live in. The world I live in was not yet right for me."

That was the spirit that drove Stella, the determination that fuelled her tireless advocacy for the causes she held close to her heart.

A feminist, an atheist and an activist with her own one-woman show at the Melbourne Comedy Festival – Stella was afraid of nothing and believed she could do anything.

Stella was a qualified teacher but became a national educator about people living with a disability.

She was a strong, passionate and wickedly funny voice for hundreds of thousands of Australians with disabilities.

As a feisty and fearless panel member on Q&A, a pull-no-punches writer for the ABC online, editor of the *Ramp Up* website, and the author of a TED talk with more than 1.5 million hits, the sweep of her influence was vast.

We had the privilege of working closely with Stella during the creation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

We will always be grateful for the contribution that her sharp wit, her limitless self-belief and her boundless optimism made to empowering hundreds of thousands of Australians, freeing them from the exile of a second class life in their own country.

On more than one occasion, Stella said *'I'm not your inspiration thank you very much'*.

Then – and now – we respectfully disagree.

She was an inspiration, for all of us.

Our heartfelt condolences to Stella's family and friends.

May she rest in peace.

MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 2014