17 April 2020

Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, Minister for Families and Social Services
The Hon Stuart Robert MP, Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme
The Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: DisabilityRCCoordination@ag.gov.au

Dear Ministers,

Thank you for your letter of 15 April 2020 and for the outline of steps taken by the Commonwealth in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to people with disability.

The Royal Commission welcomes the establishment of both the Advisory Committee on the Health Response to COVID-19 for People with Disability and the Disability Support Services Committee.

We also welcome the focus on the immediate needs of participants to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), as well as broader measures you have outlined that will also provide support to people with disability who are not NDIS participants.

I note that we have recently published an issues paper on emergency planning and responses to further gather information from people with disability, their representative organisations and other stakeholders on how Australian governments can better plan, prepare and respond to disasters and crises, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic and also the 2019-2020 bushfire season.

We are interested in understanding how emergency planning and response can include and support people with disability, and what should be done to prevent people with disability from experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation during emergencies. We would welcome a submission from the Australian government on these issues.

Yours sincerely,

Ronald Sackville AO QC
Chair