How to use this report

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (the Royal Commission) wrote this report.

When you see the words ‘we’ or ‘us’, it means the Royal Commission.

We have written this report in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

We have written some words in **bold**.
This means the letters are thicker and darker.

We explain what these words mean.
There is a list of these words on page 35.

This Easy Read report is a summary of another report. This means it only includes the most important ideas.
You can find the other report on our website.

You can ask for help to read this report. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.
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What is this Royal Commission about?

This Royal Commission is called the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. We usually call it the Royal Commission.

We need the Royal Commission because we know that people with disability experience:

- **violence** – if someone is hurting you physically
- **abuse** – if someone is treating you badly
- **neglect** – if someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you
- **exploitation** – if someone is taking advantage of you.
What is this report about?

We write a Progress Report every 6 months.

We wrote our First Progress Report in December 2019.

This is our Second Progress Report.

It explains the work we did from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2020.

It also talks about the work we will do for the rest of 2020.
Who are the Commissioners?

The Honourable Ronald Sackville leads the Royal Commission. He is called the Chair of the Royal Commission.

The other Commissioners are:

- the Honourable Roslyn Atkinson
- Commissioner Barbara Bennett
- Commissioner Rhonda Galbally
- Commissioner Andrea Mason
- Commissioner Alastair McEwin
- Commissioner John Ryan.
A message from the Chair of the Royal Commission

Mr Sackville wrote an introduction to this report.

He says the Royal Commission has done a lot of important work so far in 2020.

But COVID-19 changed everything.

COVID-19 is a virus that has affected many people around the world.

A virus is an illness or disease that can spread easily from one person to another person.
COVID-19:

- spread quickly
- is still spreading.

COVID-19 has affected all Australians.

Many people with disability have been affected by COVID-19.

We must keep people with disability safe from COVID-19.
Our work so far in 2020

COVID-19 has changed the way the Royal Commission works.

We can't meet people face to face at the moment.

We don't want to put people with disability at risk.

But we have still done a lot of important work during this time.

Our staff have been:

- working from home
- using technology to connect with people.
In March we wrote a Statement of Concern about how COVID-19 has affected people with disability.

Our Statement of Concern asked governments to make sure they keep people with disability safe during COVID-19.

Our Statement of Concern talks about some key areas of concern.

Our key areas of concern are things we are worried about.
They include making sure people with disability get:

- medicine or health supplies

- support services

- food and nutrition

- information that is easy to understand.

Other key areas of concern include people with disability who work.
We want to make sure people:

- get support to work from home
- have computers or other equipment that is easy to use.

Another key area of concern is the safety of people with disability who live in:

- group homes
- prisons
- mental health facilities.

We asked people to tell us what they think about these areas of concern.

People told us they agree with the things we are worried about.
An issue is a subject or problem that people are thinking and talking about.

We write issues papers to find out what the community thinks about some issues.

There are questions in our issues paper.

Our questions are there to get people thinking about the issue.

So far in 2020, we have published 6 issues papers.
Our Issues papers were about:

- the criminal justice system
- emergency planning and response
- rights and attitudes
- employment
• restrictive practices

• First Nations people with disability.

Restrictive practices are actions that stop people from:

• moving

• doing what they want.

You can find each of them on our website.
Public hearings

A hearing is a formal, public meeting.

When something is formal, there are strict rules about how it should be done.

When something is public:
- anyone can watch
- we share the records of what happened so anyone can read them.

Public hearing 4 was in Sydney.
It was our first hearing of the year.

It went from 18 February to 28 February.
The public hearing was about people with **cognitive disability** getting health care.

When someone has a cognitive disability, they find it hard to:

- think
- communicate
- understand
- remember.

The people who spoke included:

- people with cognitive disability
- their friends, family members and carers
- people who know a lot about the health of people with cognitive disability
- people from organisations that speak up for people with disability
- people from community organisations
- people from the Australian Government
- people from the NSW Government.
We heard that people with cognitive disability around Australia are not getting the health care services they need.

The things we wanted to hear about most were:

- the NSW health system

- how the NSW Government is making health services better for people with cognitive disability

- how the Australian Government is making health services better for people with cognitive disability.
We heard some ideas for making health care better, such as making sure:

- people with cognitive disability get more support when they need health care

- services meet the needs of First Nations people with cognitive disability

- people in rural and remote areas can get the services they need.

You can read the full transcript of this hearing if you want to find out more.

A transcript is a written record of what people said.
Community engagement

The Terms of Reference is a list of things the Royal Commission is looking into.

The Terms of Reference say we must:

- connect with people with disability
- include people with disability in our work.

We call this engagement.

We wrote a ‘Community engagement strategy’.

This strategy is a document that explains how we will:

- communicate with you
- work with different groups in the community
• ask for and use feedback

• connect with the community.

We wrote a plan for engagement with First Nations people.

First Nations people are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We shared this on our website in June 2020.
We are also working on a plan for engagement with people who:

- come from other cultures and backgrounds
- speak languages other than English.

We will share it on our website when it is ready.

**Disability Strategic Engagement Group**

We have created the Disability Strategic Engagement Group (DSEG).

We want to have a good amount of engagement between the Royal Commission and the **disability sector**.
The disability sector includes:

- people with disability
- service providers
- support workers
- **advocacy organisations**.

Advocacy organisations are groups that speak up for people with disability. They can:

- help you have your say
- give you information and advice.

The DSEG can talk to:

- people with disability
- disability organisations
- advocacy organisations.

They will have their first meeting in August 2020.
Community forums

Since January 2020, we have had 2 community forums in Queensland at:

- Logan
- Ipswich.

A community forum is an event where people get together to talk about their experiences or ideas.

100 people took part in these forums.

We heard from:

- people with disability
- family members
- advocacy organisations
- people who work with people with disability.
National phone hotline

Our national phone hotline is a phone service people can use to contact us.

We received 2,446 calls from 1 December 2019 to 30 June 2020.

So far, we have had 4,447 calls.

We kept the phone line open during COVID-19.
We received 203 calls related to COVID-19.

People told us they were worried about how to get:

- support
- food
- medicine
- equipment to keep them safe.

People also told us they were worried about having less contact with their support workers at this time.
A submission is a document that explains to the Royal Commission:

- your experience
- an idea you have.

You can make a submission in the way that is best for you. This might be:

- online
- in writing
- by email
- over the phone
- in a video
- as an audio recording.

So far, we've received 1,137 submissions.
We received 766 submissions from 1 December 2019 to 30 June 2020.

Most submissions were from people with disability.

A lot were from family members.

We also got submissions from:

- support workers
- advocates.

We have had submissions from all around Australia.

The most submissions have come from:

- NSW
- QLD
- Victoria.
A **private session** is a private meeting between:

- someone with a story to tell
- 1 or 2 of our Commissioners.

356 people have asked us for private sessions.

We had to stop holding private sessions for now because of COVID-19.

But people can still ask us to have a private session.

Almost half the people on our list for private sessions are people with disability.
Offices and staff

We have 199 staff.

We have 22 staff with disability.

We have 11 staff who are First Nations people.

We have a new public hearing room at our Brisbane offices.

We will use it when we know we are safe from COVID-19.
The new hearing room has space:

- in the public gallery for people to move chairs so people can sit in any place they choose
- for Auslan interpreters to work during hearings.
Our work in 2020

We have a lot of work planned for the rest of 2020.

We will start holding:

- public hearings
- private sessions
- community forums.

We will hold these in different places around Australia.
In August 2020 we will hold a public hearing about:

- how COVID-19 has affected the experience of people with disability

- what governments have done for people with disability during COVID-19.

We will also publish more issues papers.
**Advocacy organisations**

Advocacy organisations are groups that speak up for people with disability. They can:

- help you have your say
- give you information and advice.

**Cognitive disability**

When someone has a cognitive disability, they find it hard to:

- think
- communicate
- understand
- remember.

**Community forum**

A community forum is an event where people get together to talk about their experiences or ideas.
Disability sector

The disability sector includes:

- people with disability
- service providers
- support workers
- advocacy organisations.

Engagement

The Terms of Reference say we must:

- connect with people with disability
- include people with disability in our work.

We call this engagement.

Formal

When something is formal, there are strict rules about how it should be done.

Hearing

A hearing is a formal, public meeting.
Issue
An issue is a subject or problem that people are thinking and talking about.

Key areas of concern
Our key areas of concern are things we are very worried about.

Private sessions
A private session is a private meeting between:
- someone with a story to tell
- 1 or 2 of our Commissioners.

Public
When something is public:
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Restrictive practices
Restrictive practices are actions that stop people from:
- moving
- doing what they want.
Submission

A submission is a document that explains to the Royal Commission:

- your experience
- an idea you have.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference is a list of things the Royal Commission is looking into.

Transcript

A transcript is a written record of what people said.

Virus

A virus is an illness or disease that can spread easily from one person to another person.
Contact us

You can email us at
DRCenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au

If you have a question, you can call us on
1800 517 199.

We are available on Monday to Friday
between 9am and 5pm.

We are not available on public holidays.

You can also call the National Relay Service
on 133 677.
You can write to us at:
GPO Box 1422
Brisbane
QLD 4001

You can follow us on:

Facebook
www.facebook.com/disability.royalcommission.gov.au

Twitter
@DRC_AU

You can also subscribe to our newsletter Connect by sending an email to:
DRCmailinglist@royalcommission.gov.au

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