29 September 2023

The Government welcomes the final report of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

The report – tabled in the Australian Parliament today – follows four and a half years of inquiry by the Disability Royal Commission into how all governments, institutions and the community can prevent, and better protect Australians with disability from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

To those who contributed to the Royal Commission and to improving the lives of all people with disability: your bravery and commitment is to be commended, and we thank you all.

Your contributions have already made a difference and led to change.

This Royal Commission has enabled us as a nation to better understand what needs to change to prevent violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability. It has also identified actions to make Australia more inclusive.

The Commission's final report sets out a vision for a more inclusive Australia for the one in six Australians living with disability, in which people with disability live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation; where human rights are protected; and individuals live with dignity, equality and respect; and can fulfil their potential.

Over the course of the Royal Commission, a total of 32 public hearings and 1785 private sessions were held across all states and territories – hearing from close to 10,000 people.

It was the culmination of disability advocates, people with disability, their families and carers fighting to have their experiences listened to and their rights upheld.

The final report issued 222 recommendations in 12 volumes, and a staged and thoughtful response will be required.

To immediately begin work on responding to appropriately triaging the report's recommendations, the Government will today establish a Commonwealth

Disability Royal Commission Taskforce to work across departments and agencies to coordinate the Australian Government's response to the recommendations, engaging closely with the disability community.

This taskforce will include staff who are seconded from key Commonwealth portfolios – including Health, Education, Attorney-General's, the National

Disability Insurance Agency and the National Indigenous Australians Agency – and will have involvement from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Treasury and the

Department of Finance, to ensure our response is holistic.

The taskforce will be critical in assessing how the individual recommendations link together, understanding the broader implications of the recommendations, and developing – in close consultation with the disability community – an implementation plan for the Government's response, including robust tracking and monitoring mechanisms.

It will report through to Ministers regularly with an update on progress to be made public early next year, as a staged response to the recommendations is rolled out.

A total of $4.25 million over two years will be allocated to the taskforce to undertake this important work and it will have its own dedicated staff.

The Disability Royal Commission is a shared responsibility between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories and requires close collaboration across governments on the response to the joint Commonwealth-State recommendations.

The Commonwealth will be taking the first steps in this work by discussing the report at the next Disability Reform Ministerial Council in mid-October and by ensuring that the Royal Commission is given ongoing attention at future meetings of Commonwealth and State governments.

Responding to the recommendations will build on the work the Government has already begun implementing to improve the lives of the 4.4 million Australians living with disability.

Minister for Social Services Amanda Rishworth said the Government is committed to ensuring the right of people with disability to live free from harm is upheld.

"This report reinforces the importance of making Australia more inclusive so that people with disability can participate on an equal basis. We owe that to them all," Minister Rishworth said.

"The Government is listening: we recognise the hurt and trauma you have experienced and we are committed to creating a safer, more inclusive Australia for all people with disability.

"Importantly we have not waited for the findings of the report to progress a range of initiatives dedicated to improving support for, and inclusion of, people with disability."

"Our Government will carefully consider the Disability Royal Commission's report, and work collaboratively to consider and progress the necessary reform to make Australia safe and inclusive for all people with disability."

Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme and Government Services Bill Shorten thanked the Disability Royal Commission for its work and said the report will bring about generational change for Australians with disability.

“People with disability have been waiting years for this report to come to light. It recommends potentially life changing reforms, but we need time to consider them all.

“Of particular importance is ensuring Australia is the most inclusive country it can be and that people with disabilities’ human rights are protected and at the heart of everything we do as a society.

“As the Minister for the NDIS, I am pleased the report shows we are moving in the right direction with the reforms we have already begun to undertake.

We expect the Independent NDIS Review report to be handed down in a few weeks will complement the Royal Commission recommendations.

“I will work closely with Minister Rishworth and across the whole government in response to the Royal Commission report.”

The final report is available on the Disability Royal Commission website.

If you have experienced or witnessed someone being hurt, treated badly or taken advantage of, you may want support.

If you would like to speak to a counsellor near you, visit the Department of Social Services website to find a service in your state or territory.

You can also contact the National Counselling and Referral Service on 1800 421 468 for emotional support, or ask to be connected to a counsellor near you. If you are deaf or hard of hearing and/or find it hard speaking with people who use a phone, call the National Relay Service (NRS) on 133 677.

If you are currently experiencing any form of violence or abuse, or you are concerned for your or someone else’s safety, call 000 immediately.

Related articles

Category

- News

The Australian Government releases its initial response to the Disability Royal Commission final report

Date
1 August 2024

Media release from the Minister - Disability Ministers from around Australia set priorities for the year ahead

Date
13 February 2023
Category

- Media release from the Minister

Budget delivers for people with disability

Date
15 May 2024
Read more news