



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

How the COVID-19 pandemic affected people with disability

Our response to the Disability Royal Commission's COVID-19 report

Easy Read version

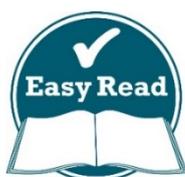


How to use this document



The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) wrote this document on behalf of the Australian Government.

When you see the word 'we', it means the Government.



We wrote this document in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Not bold
Bold

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 24.



This Easy Read document is a summary of another document. This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find more information on our website at www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/publications-articles/general



You can ask for help to read this document.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

What's in this document?

What is the Disability Royal Commission?	4
What is this document about?	5
What did the Royal Commission say?	7
Important ideas from the report	9
What we did during the COVID-19 pandemic	12
What we are working on	16
What we will do in the future	20
More information	21
Word list	24

What is the Disability Royal Commission?



A **royal commission** is how the government looks into a big problem.



It helps us find out what:

- went wrong
- we can fix.

The Disability Royal Commission is about how people with disability experience:



- **violence** – when someone hurts you physically



- **abuse** – when someone treats you badly



- **neglect** – when someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you



- **exploitation** – when someone takes advantage of you.



In this document, we call it the Royal Commission.

What is this document about?

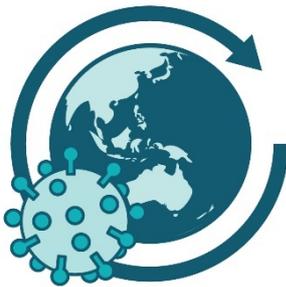


The Royal Commission talked to the community about how the **COVID-19 pandemic** affected people with disability.

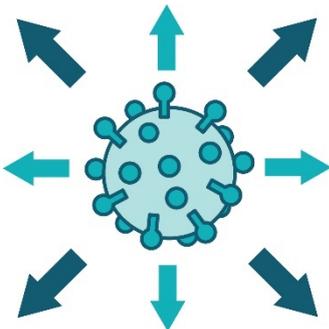
COVID-19:



- is an illness that can spread easily from one person to another person



- has affected many people around the world.



COVID-19 is a pandemic because it spread quickly to lots of countries around the world.



The Royal Commission wrote a report about what they heard.



The report included **recommendations** about how we should support people with disability during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic.



Recommendations are ideas about things that can be done to make something better.



You can find the Easy Read version of the Royal Commission's report on **their website**.



We carefully read and thought about their report.



It's important that we share our ideas about their report.



This document is our response to the Royal Commission's report.

What did the Royal Commission say?



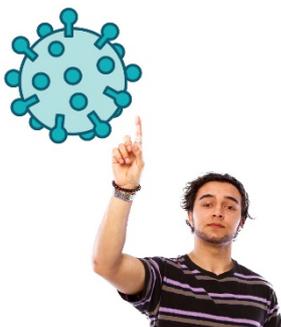
The Royal Commission wrote 22 recommendations in their report.



We agree with 21 of their recommendations.



We need more time to think about the other recommendation.



The Royal Commission's recommendations were mostly about what we did when the COVID-19 pandemic started.

In the report they asked us to:



- think about what the report said



- quickly fix the problems people told them about.

Important ideas from the report



The Royal Commission's report included some important ideas.



During emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic we must keep people with disability:

- healthy
- safe.



We need to protect the **rights** of people with disability.



Rights are rules about how everybody should be treated:

- fairly
- equally.



We need to work with state and territory governments to make sure people with disability can get help during emergencies.

When we plan for an emergency, we must include:



- people with disability



- disability organisations



- **advocacy organisations.**

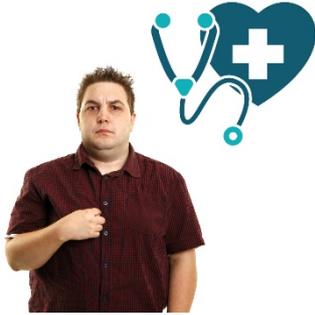
Advocacy organisations are groups that speak up for people with disability. They can:



- help you have your say



- give you information and advice.



People with disability should never miss out on health care because of their disability.



We agree with these important ideas.

What we did during the COVID-19 pandemic



We told the Royal Commission what we did during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic to keep people with disability:

- healthy
- safe.



We set up **accessible** ways to communicate with people with disability.



When something is accessible, everyone can use it.



For example, we set up a new phone information hotline called the Disability Information Helpline.

We had meetings about the COVID-19 pandemic with:



- people with disability



- disability organisations.



We made parts of the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** easier for people with disability to use.



The NDIS is a way the Australian Government supports some people with disability.

We made sure people who work with people with disability:



- had information and equipment to help stop COVID-19 spreading



- could use programs like **JobKeeper**.



JobKeeper is how the Government helps businesses pay their staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.



We paid some people and businesses who work with people with disability while they had time off work.



We provided more money to organisations that speak up for people with disability.

We made sure we:



- listened to the best medical advice



- used this information to help people with disability.

What we are working on



We have already started to do a lot to protect people with disability during emergencies.



We are continuing to protect the rights of people with disability.



We are including more people in meetings to plan what we will do in emergencies, including:

- people with disability
- disability organisations.



We are collecting better **data** about people with disability to use in an emergency.



Data includes:

- facts
- information
- records.



We are making sure **First Nations people** with disability are part of important meeting groups.



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



We are giving people who work in disability accommodation information about:

- how to stop the spread of COVID-19
- what to do during emergencies.



We are **reviewing** the training people who work with people with disability got about the COVID-19 pandemic.

When you review something, you check to see what:



- works well
- needs to be better.



We are reviewing parts of the **NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission**.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) makes sure people with disability who take part in the NDIS:



- are safe



- get good services.



Our review will make sure they are set up well for emergencies.

We are making sure disability support workers can get:



- **personal protective equipment (PPE)**



- tested for COVID-19 easily.

PPE includes things like:



- face masks
- face shields
- gloves.

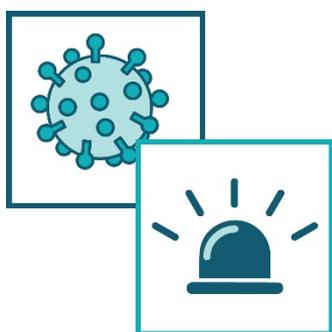
What we will do in the future



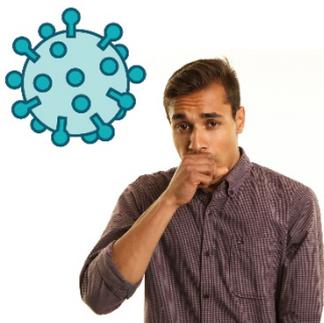
In the future we will keep working with other state and territory governments to keep people with disability:

- healthy
- safe.

In the future we will also make sure we focus on this during:



- the COVID-19 pandemic
- other emergencies.



We will make sure some people have the COVID-19 vaccination first, including people who are more at risk of:

- catching the virus
- getting very sick if they catch the virus.



This includes:

- people with disability
- disability support workers.

More information

COVID-19



You might want:

- to talk to someone if you are worried about COVID-19
- more information about COVID-19.



You can call the Disability Gateway on **1800 643 787**.

They are open from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday to Friday.



You can also visit the Disability Gateway website www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/coronavirus.



You can visit the Department of Health website at www.health.gov.au for more information about COVID-19 **vaccines**.

A vaccine is medicine that:



- helps people fight COVID-19 if they come in contact with it
- can stop people from getting very sick from COVID-19.



You can call the National Coronavirus Helpline on **1800 020 080**.



If you need information in a language other than English, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on **131 450**.



If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can call the National Relay Service on **133 677**.

Disability Royal Commission



You might want:

- more information about the Royal Commission
- to take part in the Royal Commission.



You can visit the Royal Commission website at disability.royalcommission.gov.au/



You can get free:

- advocacy support
- **counselling support.**



Counselling support is when you:

- talk to someone about how you think and feel
- talk about ways to help you feel better.

You can:



- visit www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/disability-counselling-and-advocacy-support



- call **1800 421 468**

They are open:



- 9 am to 6 pm, Monday to Friday



- 9 am to 5 pm on weekends and national public holidays.

Word list



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.



Accessible

When something is accessible, everyone can use it.



COVID-19

COVID-19:

- is an illness that can spread easily from one person to another person
- has affected many people around the world.



Data

Data includes:

- facts
- information
- records.



First Nations people

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



JobKeeper

JobKeeper is how the Government helps businesses pay their staff during the COVID-19 pandemic.



National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIS)

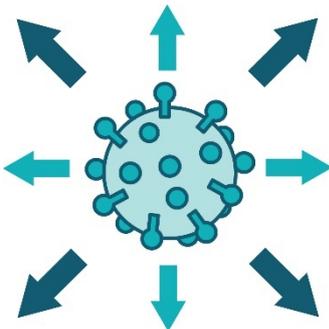
The NDIS is a way the Australian Government supports people with disability.

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission



The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) makes sure people with disability who take part in the NDIS:

- are safe
- get good services.



Pandemic

COVID-19 is a pandemic because it spread quickly to lots of countries around the world.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

PPE includes things like:



- face masks
- face shields
- gloves.



Recommendations

Recommendations are ideas about things that can be done to make something better.



Review

When you review something, you check to see what:

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Rights

Rights are rules about how everybody should be treated:

- fairly
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Vaccine

A vaccine is medicine that:

- helps people fight COVID-19 if they come in contact with it
- can stop people from getting very sick from COVID-19.



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