



Royal Commission
into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation
of People with Disability

Listening to First Nations people with disability

Disability Royal Commission

Easy Read version



September 2023

How to use this brochure



The Disability Royal Commission
(the Royal Commission) wrote this brochure.

When you see the word 'we', it means
the Royal Commission.



We wrote this brochure in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.



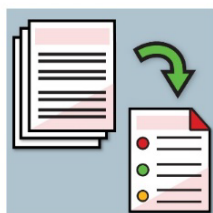
We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these bold words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 27.



This brochure is a **summary** of another brochure.

A summary only includes the most important ideas.



You can ask for help to read this brochure.

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

Acknowledgement of Country



We recognise First Nations peoples as the traditional owners of the land we live on – Australia.



They were the first people to live on and use the:

- land
- waters.

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About the Royal Commission



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



It helps us find out:

- what went wrong
- what we need to improve.

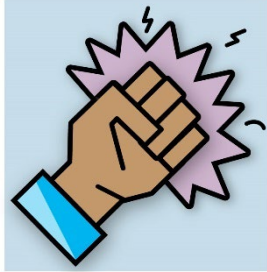


The Australian Government started the Royal Commission in April 2019.



And the Royal Commission ended in September 2023.

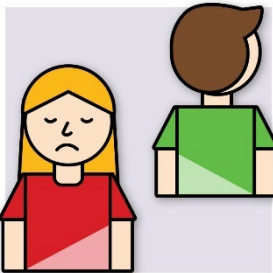
This Royal Commission was about how people with disability experience:



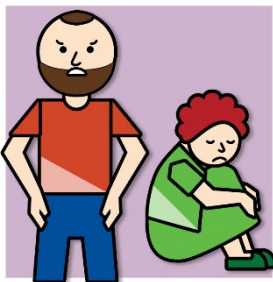
- **violence** – when someone hurts you physically



- **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.



The Australian Government chose 6 people to be **Commissioners**.

The Commissioners were the people in charge of the Royal Commission.



Andrea Mason was a Commissioner.

She is a First Nations person.

Andrea is a Ngaanyatjarra and Pitjantjatjara woman from Western Australia.



Andrea's understanding of the experiences of First Nations people with disability guided the way we did our work.

About this brochure

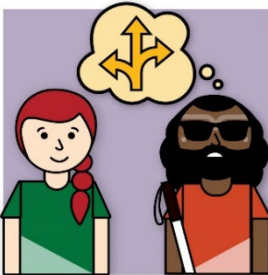


We focused on the experiences of First Nations peoples in all parts of the Royal Commission.

Some of our work focused on issues that:



- only affect First Nations people with disability



- affect First Nations people with disability in different ways to other people.

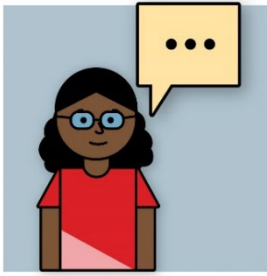


This included the **rights** of First Nations people with disability.

Rights are rules that say you can choose how you live your own life.

And they explain how other people must treat you.

We heard from:



- First Nations people with disability



- their families and communities.



This brochure explains what First Nations people with disability told us about the issues they face.



It also explains what we **recommend**.



When we recommend something, we share an idea about how to make things better for people with disability.

How First Nations people shared their experiences



An **advisory group** helped guide the way we worked with First Nations peoples.

An advisory group is a group of people who use advice to guide the way we do something.



The advisory group was called the First Nations Peoples Strategic Advisory Group.



The advisory group included First Nations people:

- with disability
- who work in disability services.



We had 3 **public hearings** that focused on First Nations people with disability.



A public hearing is a meeting that follows strict rules.

Anyone can watch a public hearing.

And we share the records of what happened so anyone can see them.



We also used research to find out about issues that affect First Nations people with disability.

We shared 5 reports about this research.



About **10%** of the **submissions** that people sent to us came from First Nations people.



A submission is a document or recording that explains:

- what someone experienced
- an idea someone had.



About **10%** of all our **private sessions** were with First Nations people.



A private session is a private meeting between:

- someone with a story to tell
- one of our Commissioners.

Community activities



We ran more than **370** community activities to help us connect with First Nations people with disability.

We met with people in different places, including:



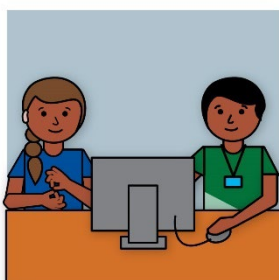
- in their homes



- in community centres



- on front lawns and in parks



- in offices and meeting rooms.



Visiting First Nations communities helped us understand:

- their experiences
- the issues they face.



Many people made a submission after taking part in our community activities.

Disability in First Nations communities



First Nations peoples might not use the word 'disability'.



And First Nations peoples might not:

- think about themselves as people with disability
- share if they have a disability.



We used information from a survey in 2019.

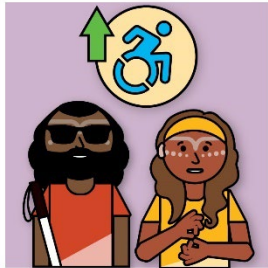
The survey was about the health of First Nations peoples.



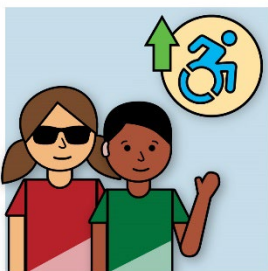
The survey showed that about **35%** of First Nations people under 65 years old had a disability.



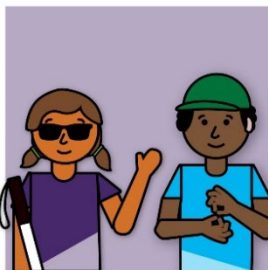
But only **12%** of all Australians under 65 had a disability.



This means First Nations people are nearly **3 times** more likely to have a disability.



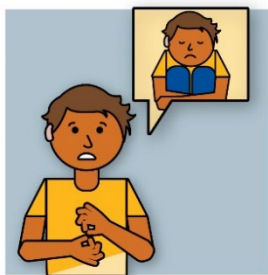
The survey also showed that First Nations children were more likely to have a disability.



About **22%** of First Nations children had a disability.



But only about **8%** of all children in Australia had a disability.

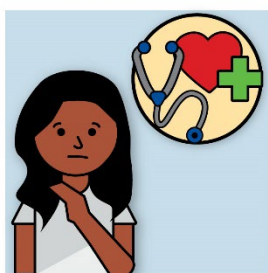


First Nations people with disability told us about how they experience **discrimination** in many parts of life.

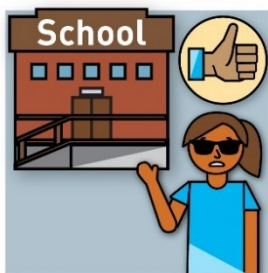


Discrimination is when someone treats you unfairly because of a part of who you are.

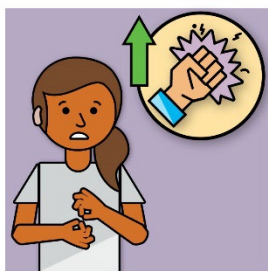
Discrimination can make it harder for First Nations people with disability to:



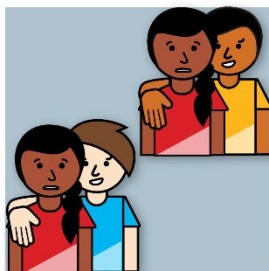
- get good health care



- do well at school.



First Nations women with disability are also more likely to experience violence from their partner.

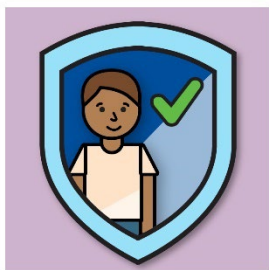


This includes partners who:

- are also a First Nations person
- aren't a First Nations person.

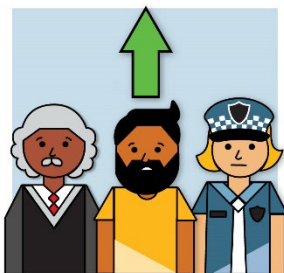


First Nations families that include people with disability are more likely to have contact with **child protection**.



Child protection helps children stay safe.

The government runs child protection.



And First Nations people with disability are also more likely to go into the **justice system**.

The justice system includes:



- prisons
- the courts
- police
- the law.

The *Final report*



We wrote the *Final report* when the Royal Commission ended.



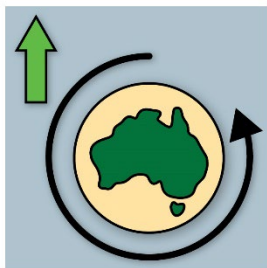
It explains:

- what we learned from the Royal Commission
- what we recommend.



Our *Final report* has 12 parts.

They are called 'volumes'.



In our report we recommend **222** ways to make Australia more **inclusive**.

And keep people with disability safe.



When something is inclusive, everyone:

- can take part
- feels like they belong.



Volume 9 in the *Final report* is about what First Nations people with disability experience.

It is called *First Nations people with disability*.



Volume 9 explains what we heard from:

- First Nations people with disability
- their families and communities.

Culturally safe services

We heard that **culturally safe** services can help protect First Nations people with disability from:



- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.



When the community is culturally safe, people understand and respect the cultures of First Nations people with disability.



And also understand their needs as a person with disability.



We heard there aren't enough culturally safe **providers**.



Providers support people by delivering a service.

This means First Nations people with disability often have to choose between:



- their culture

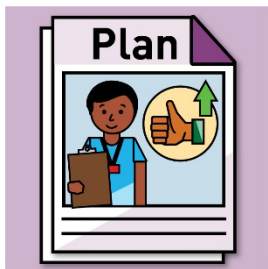
or



- getting support.



In Volume 9 we recommend ways to support First Nations people with disability to speak up about what they want and need.



We also recommend making a better plan about how to make disability services better for First Nations peoples.



We recommend making rules for providers about how to be culturally safe.



And we recommend making sure there are enough First Nations disability workers to support people with disability.

Including people who live far away from cities and towns.

First Nations peoples and the NDIS



The National Disability Insurance Scheme supports people with disability around Australia.

We call it the NDIS.



But the NDIS doesn't always work well for First Nations people with disability.

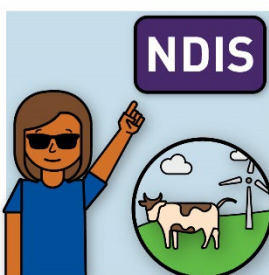


The National Disability Insurance Agency runs the NDIS.

We call it the NDIA.



We recommend the NDIA should make the community connector program better.



Community connectors help First Nations peoples who live very far away from cities and towns:

- learn about the NDIS
- connect with the NDIS.



There should be more community connectors to support more communities far away from cities and towns.



The NDIA should support communities to provide community connectors.



And community connectors should speak local languages.



We recommend the NDIA have a First Nations person on their **Board**.



A board is a group of people who make decisions for:

- an organisation
- a company.



We also recommend the NDIS supports people to take part in their culture.



We recommend the NDIS support First Nations people to care for family members with disability.



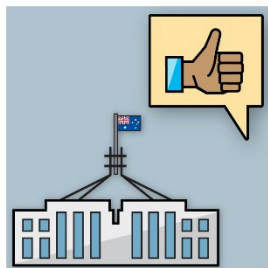
And support Return to Country for First Nations people with disability.

This is when First Nations people return to the traditional lands and culture of their family.

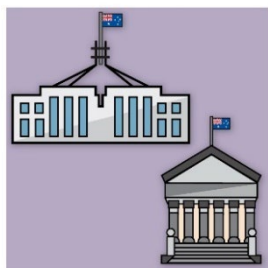
Beyond the Royal Commission



The Royal Commission finished on 29 September 2023.



The governments in Australia must think about what we recommend.



This includes:

- the Australian Government
- state and territory governments.



They should each write a response to our *Final report*.



They should explain what they will do.

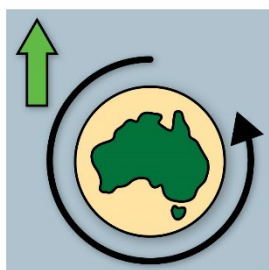


And what they won't do.

They should also explain why they decided not to.



All governments should work with First Nations people with disability to work towards a future that they want.



This will create a more inclusive Australia.

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this report mean.



Abuse

Abuse is when someone treats you badly.



Advisory group

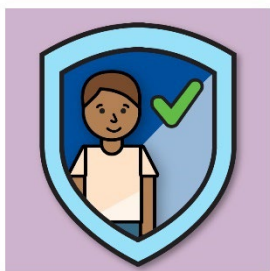
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Child protection

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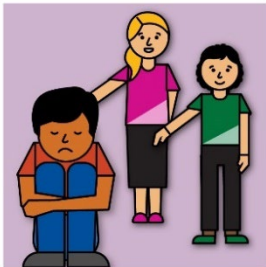
Commissioners

The Commissioners were the people in charge of the Royal Commission.



Culturally safe

When the community is culturally safe, people understand and respect the cultures of First Nations people with disability.



Discrimination

Discrimination is when someone treats you unfairly because of a part of who you are.



Exploitation

Exploitation is when someone takes advantage of you.



Inclusive

When something is inclusive, everyone:

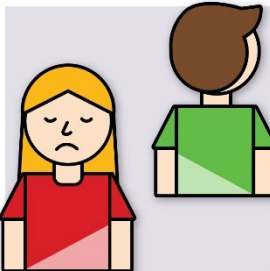
- can take part
- feels like they belong.



Justice system

The justice system includes:

- prisons
- the courts
- police
- the law.



Neglect

Neglect is when someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you.



Private session

A private session is a private meeting between:

- someone with a story to tell
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Providers

Providers support people by delivering a service.



Public hearing

A public hearing is a meeting that follows strict rules.

Anyone can watch a public hearing.

And we share the records of what happened so anyone can see them.



Recommend

When we recommend something, we share an idea about how to make things better for people with disability.



Rights

Rights are rules that say you can choose how you live your own life.

And they explain how other people must treat you.



Royal Commission

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

It helps us find out:

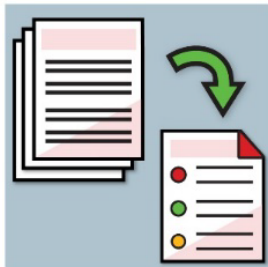
- what went wrong
- what we need to improve.



Submission

A submission is a document or recording that explains:

- what someone experienced
- an idea someone had.



Summary

A summary only includes the most important ideas.



Violence

Violence is when someone hurts you physically.

Support for you



Blue Knot Foundation offers free **counselling support** to anyone who needs it.



Counselling support is when you:

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



You can call Blue Knot Foundation.

1800 421 468



They are open every day.



You can send Blue Knot Foundation an email.

helpline@blueknot.org.au

Contact us



The Disability Royal Commission has ended.

If you have questions, you can contact the Attorney-General's Department.



You can call them.

(02) 6141 6666



Or you can use the form on their website.

www.ag.gov.au/about-us/connect-us/contact-us



You can also contact them to make a complaint.

This is when you explain that something:

- has gone wrong
- isn't working well.

Support to contact the Attorney-General's Department



You can call the National Relay Service.

133 677



You can visit the Access Hub website to find the right service for you.

www.accesshub.gov.au/services



If you speak a language other than English, you can call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

1800 131 450

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