



Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse,
Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability
GPO Box 1422
BRISBANE QLD 4001

By email: DRcenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au

Dear Commissioners

Initial submission

The Commission for Children and Young People is pleased to make this initial submission to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with a Disability. As Victoria's independent statutory body focused on protecting children and young people's safety, wellbeing and rights, we know that children and young people with disability face a disproportionate risk of violence, abuse and neglect.

Unfortunately, our work frequently involves children and young people with disability who have experienced violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in different contexts and settings. Our functions include:

- conducting inquiries when a child dies and they were involved with Victoria's child protection system in the year before they died
- providing independent oversight of Victoria's out-of-home care system and youth justice centres, including monitoring serious incidents such as assaults
- regulating and supporting organisations that work with children and young people to prevent abuse and ensure organisations have child-safe practices, including practices that are safe for children and young people with disability.

This initial submission highlights the key issues relating to this work that are directly relevant to the matters the Royal Commission is examining:

- **Attachment A** outlines the key areas that we consider require the Royal Commission's attention
- **Attachment B** provides our comments, including some recommendations for change, on issues relating to inclusive education which has been an early focus of the Royal Commission's work.

We highlight issues identified in Victoria but expect that many, if not most, are experienced in other states and territories, or are relevant nationally. We would be pleased to expand on any of the points raised and provide any further information that may assist the Royal Commission.

More broadly, we welcome the Royal Commission's rights-based approach and regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its special focus on the experiences of Aboriginal people and its commitment to directly engaging with people with disability.

Our experience is that the voices of children and young people with disability are rarely heard by the services, organisations and systems we oversee. It is essential children's voices are heard and heeded by this Royal Commission and we encourage you to ensure this occurs.

Further information about the Commission is also enclosed (**Attachment C**). If we can assist the Royal Commission's inquiries at any stage, please contact Lachlan Zangari, Team Leader, Analysis (03 8601 5242, Lachlan.Zangari@ccyp.vic.gov.au).

We look forward to making further contributions to assist the Royal Commission's significant work.

Yours sincerely



Liana Buchanan
Principal Commissioner

17/3/20



Justin Mohamed
**Commissioner for Aboriginal
Children and Young People**

17/8/2020