



Disability Royal Commission  
GPO Box 1422  
Brisbane Queensland 4001

20 December, 2019

To Whom it May Concern

**Re: QDN Response to the Disability Royal Commission's Education and Learning Issues Paper**

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) welcomes the opportunity to make a brief submission to the Disability Royal Commission's Education and Learning Issues Paper.

QDN is an organisation of, for, and with people with disability with over 2000 members and supporters. QDN operates a state-wide network of members who provide information, feedback and views from the lived experience of people with disability to inform systemic policy feedback to Government and peak bodies. QDN also provides information and referral support to people with disability. QDN's submission is reflective of the views of our members.

In making our submission, QDN supports the human rights-based and intersectional approaches to this inquiry and acknowledges the work of the Queensland Collective of Inclusive Education (QCIE) and gives in principle support to their submission.

Many QDN members have spoken to us about their experiences in education, reflecting on the importance of an inclusive education, giving personal accounts of how this has led to increased opportunities post school in relation to building friendships and connections with peers, increased opportunities to undertake paid work, the opportunity to undertake further studies at university or TAFE and pursuing other life goals such as creating a home, getting married and having children. Some people acknowledge the opportunity to explore regular goals has come about as these were also shared goals of their classmates.

QDN members have also identified that 'education doesn't finish at the school gate'. QDN supports inclusive post-school tertiary education that gives people with disability opportunity to undertake university courses, technical, vocational or further education programs with the support they require and reasonable adjustments, including modified assessments where necessary. QDN is aware some courses may exclude students with disability from these levels of education due to inherent requirements that a person must have in order to participate in the course.

Ground Floor, 338 Turbot Street, Spring Hill Qld 4000  
phone: 07 3252 8566 local call from landline: 1300 363 783  
email: [qdn@qdn.org.au](mailto:qdn@qdn.org.au) web: [qdn.org.au](http://qdn.org.au)

QDN believes that when children with a disability are included in schools from an early age this has flow-on effects in promoting a more inclusive society as children grow up seeing disability as a regular part of life and children are more accepting of difference. This leads to more inclusive communities with people with disability taking part in the broader social and cultural elements of society and taking up regular opportunities alongside their peers.

QDN supports the transition from segregated education to fully inclusive education and acknowledges that a number of cultural shifts need to occur in order for this to happen. These include:

- Acknowledging the rightful place of students with disability is in regular education settings
- Rethinking the way education resources are allocated: re-purposing funding for special education into making inclusive education work. This would include special education professionals using their knowledge to explore ways students can be supported in regular education settings.
- Providing adequate supports for all students across all education levels to fully participate, be included, and develop meaningful relationships with peers. Strategies would include adaptable curriculum and assessment, opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities and a focus on healthy relationships and inclusive social programs in schools.
- Anti-bullying programs that address violence that are particularly focused on the impact of bullying on students with disability, including mandatory reporting and effective investigation of violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation of people with disability in education and learning settings, recognising and responding appropriately to violence and bullying behaviour, acceptance of difference and keeping people safe.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this brief submission to the Disability Royal Commission. QDN looks forward to further opportunities to engage in the work of the Commission. If you have any further questions, please call QDN on 1300 363 783.

Yours sincerely



Paige Armstrong

Chief Executive Officer