

# Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability: Final Report Recommendations

## QDN Member Forums

*November – December 2023*



# QDN

QUEENSLANDERS WITH DISABILITY NETWORK  
NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

# About Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN)

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) is an organisation of, for, and with people with disability. QDN operates a state-wide network of 2,000+ members and supporters who provide information, feedback and views based on their lived experience, which inform the organisation's systemic advocacy activities. We believe people with disability should always be at the table when decisions are made that directly impact their lives.

## Introduction

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission (DRC)) released its final report on 29 September 2023. The Department of Social Services invited submissions from interested individuals and organisations to respond to the recommendations.

In November and December 2023, QDN facilitated four DRC member forums. The first forum was a presentation from Tim Fell, A/Executive Director, Strategic Policy and Legislation, Seniors and Disability Services, Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services, Queensland Government. Tim presented on Queensland Government's process for responding to the Australian Government on the recommendations. This was followed by a Q&A session with members.

The following three forums covered recommendations on housing, health and employment and provided an opportunity to hear from QDN members on these important topics. Following a brief presentation on the key themes in the recommendations, members were divided into break out rooms to discuss the themes. QDN staff were available in each breakout room to facilitate the conversation and provide further information about specific recommendations if requested by members.

In total there were 87 members who came together to share valuable feedback, insights and ideas regarding which recommendations they felt should be prioritised.

This report shares what we heard from members during the forums.

## Breakout room discussion on key themes

### Housing

People with disability are at higher risk of homelessness and QDN members were clear in the discussion that this needs to be addressed as a priority at all levels of government. The stories, insights and knowledge shared in the forum show that members have a deep understanding of the historical context of people with disability living in systems where they have limited choice and control to determine the direction of their own lives. QDN members were unanimous that people with disability must be at the centre of housing design, development, systems and processes to ensure people with disability have the opportunity to choose their place of residence and with whom they live, to have access to a range of services that support their inclusion in the community and prevent social isolation.

The key themes from the conversation include:

- Safe, accessible and affordable housing is a human right and all people with disability should be prioritised regardless of access to the NDIS
- Accessible housing standards need to be improved to gold standard (Recommendation 7.35)
- Support is needed for people with disability transitioning out of group homes and into other housing including appropriate NDIS supports, financial literacy support and capacity building (Recommendation 7.38, 7.42)

- People with disability need to be included in co-design processes at all stages of accessible housing development and building standards processes (Recommendation 7.42)
- Consider alternative housing options that are easier and more affordable to make accessible from scratch rather than retrofitting or demolishing and rebuilding (Recommendation 7.35)
- Social housing operational policies and processes need to be improved (Recommendation 7.36)
- More collaboration is needed between people with disability, peak bodies, developers, investors, state government and local council to ensure housing is accessible and is located in accessible communities (Recommendation 7.35)
- People with disability are at higher risk of homelessness, this needs to be addressed as a priority (Recommendations 7.39, 7.40)
- Review Supported Disability Accommodation (SDA) guidelines/model to reduce conflict of interest with Supported Independent Living (SIL) services (Recommendations 7.38, 7.41)
- Advocacy for independent living in particular the transition out of hospital and into appropriate housing (Recommendation 7.38)
- Housing isn't only a Department of Housing issue, funding should also come from health, education, employment and other departments (Recommendation 7.33).

## Health

QDN members spoke to their experiences of navigating health care systems and discussed what works, what doesn't and whether the recommendations relating to health address the challenges and barriers people experience. Much of the discussion focused on those areas where members felt the biggest impact would be made to improving health care experiences including workforce development, navigation and advocacy.

The key themes from the conversation include:

- All health care professionals should undertake regular disability awareness and trauma-informed training and education (Recommendations 6.25-6.29)
- Better support mechanisms and accessibility is needed in hospitals (Recommendation 6.32)
- Equitable access to healthcare services especially in rural and remote areas (Recommendation 6.31)
- Agree with people with disability being allowed a support person in health care setting (Recommendation 6.31)
- Implement a card or document for people with disability to give to health care professionals on admission to hospital to reduce lives lost and trauma (Recommendation 6.32)
- Consider intersectionality of people with disability and the diverse range of disabilities
- Improve how data is recorded/reported on, collect data on the suffering of the person in the lead up to their death, not just their death (Recommendations 5.5, 6.19, 6.22, 12.5-12.8)
- A more transparent complaints process is needed (Recommendations 6.32, 6.34, 6.35)
- Advocates and navigators needed in health care settings to provide a more holistic approach from the point of admission through to securing appropriate housing when discharged (Recommendations 6.21, 6.34)
- National agreements and plans don't always reach health professionals on the ground. Strategies need to be put in place and requirements for health care professionals to maintain standards of care and understanding for people with disability (Recommendation 5.4)
- The Disability Rights Act should be prioritised (Recommendation 4.5)
- Restrictive practices should be prohibited (Recommendations 6.35-6.40)

- Involuntary sterilisation should be prohibited (Recommendation 6.41).

## Employment

Employment is an important issue for QDN members and many members attending the employment forum have been involved in consultations spanning decades on inclusive employment. The discussion reflected the importance of access, support and retention, through personal accounts of seeking and being in employment. QDN members have a diversity of disability and this is reflected in their experiences. Many experienced discrimination, some experienced employment services positively and some experienced them very negatively. Activity to support employment outcomes for people with disability needs to reflect this diversity and individual unique experience. QDN members strongly advise that any implementation of the recommendations must engage with people with disability and seek to co-design strategies and actions ensuring diversity and inclusion.

The key themes from the conversation include:

- All employment settings should be integrated so that if people choose to stay in an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE) that environment is integrated (Recommendations 7.30, 7.32)
- Employment targets and strategies should be implemented across all industries (Recommendations 7.19, 7.22)
- Use existing data, research and knowledge to increase inclusive employment, people with disability have repeatedly told government, business and recruitment companies what needs to change but very little has been done (Recommendation 7.17)
- The employment passport is a good concept and should be adopted by workplaces beyond just government (Recommendation 7.21)
- Workplaces should receive an accessibility tick of approval or grading on workplace accessibility (Recommendation 7.22)
- Use a strengths-based approach to employing people with disability, for example peer support roles in health care settings
- Address conscious and unconscious bias in workplaces to reduce discrimination, bias, and bullying (Recommendation 7.17)
- Co-design employment and workplace strategies with people with disability at the systemic level and in the workplace (Recommendation 7.16)
- Address employment limitations for people in regional areas including lack of public transport, lack of support and community perception of people with disability (Recommendation 7.16).