



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

# Research Report

**Making services better for  
First Nations people with disability**

**Easy Read version**



## How to use this report

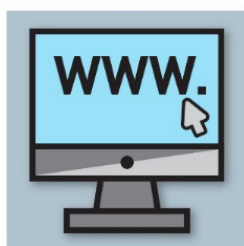


Deloitte is an organisation that does research.

Deloitte wrote this report for the Disability Royal Commission (the Royal Commission).



The report is called *Options to improve service availability and accessibility for First Nations people with disability*.



You can find the report on our website.

[www.disability.royalcommission.gov.au/policy-and-research/research-program](http://www.disability.royalcommission.gov.au/policy-and-research/research-program)

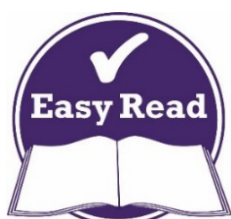


This Easy Read report is a **summary** of that report.

A summary only includes the most important ideas.



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



We wrote this report in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**  
Not bold

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 34.



You can ask for help to read this report.

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

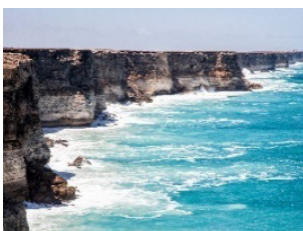


We recognise First Nations peoples as the traditional owners of our land – Australia.

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



- land



- waters.

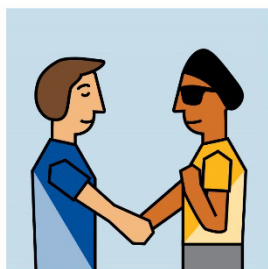
## What's in this report?

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## What's this report about?



We asked some researchers at Deloitte to do some research for us.



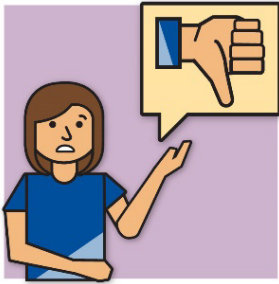
The researchers spoke with many people about how disability **providers** treat First Nations people with disability.



Providers support people by delivering a service.



They heard that First Nations people with disability have bad experiences with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).



And they have bad experiences with the **disability sector**.



The disability sector includes everyone who delivers services to people with disability, such as:

- providers
- support workers
- **advocates.**



An advocate is someone who can:

- support you
- help you have your say
- give you information and advice.

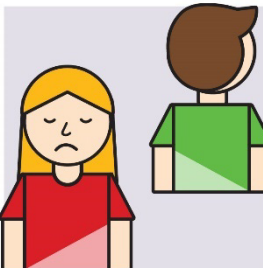
These bad experiences can put First Nations people with disability at risk of:



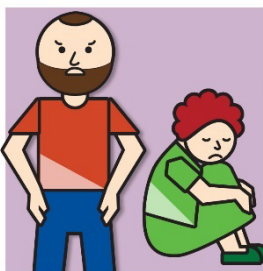
- **violence** – when someone hurts you physically



- **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.

## Why is this research important?



We know that First Nations people with disability can experience **intersectionality**.



Intersectionality happens when people treat people with disability differently because of both:

- their disability
- other things about them that they cannot change, like their background or **culture**.

Your culture is:



- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up
- your beliefs
- what is important to you.

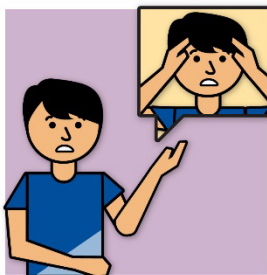
Because of intersectionality, First Nations people with disability can receive services that:



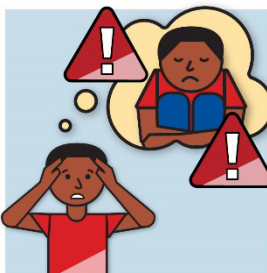
- are not safe



- don't treat them fairly



- cause **trauma**.



Trauma is the way you feel about something bad that happened to you.

For example, you might feel scared or stressed.

Trauma can affect you for a long time.

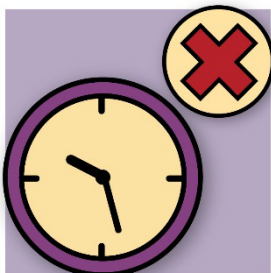


The disability sector needs better ways to support First Nations people with disability.



First Nations peoples have been saying this for many years.

But things only get harder for them.



There is no more time to wait.



The disability sector must change now.

## What did the researchers hear about the disability sector?



The researchers heard the same things from many people.

And the **data** showed that these things are true.



When we talk about data, we mean:

- facts
- information
- records.



This helped the researchers understand what needs to change in the disability sector.

## Support for community organisations

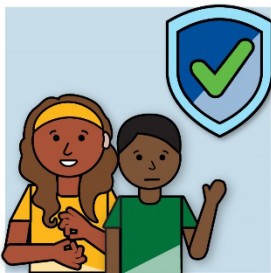


**Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)** are organisations that:

- First Nations people run
- support First Nations peoples in the community.

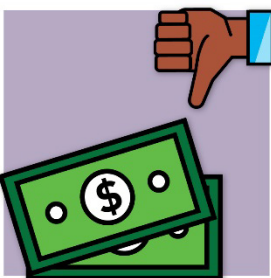


Some ACCOs offer community supports for First Nations peoples.

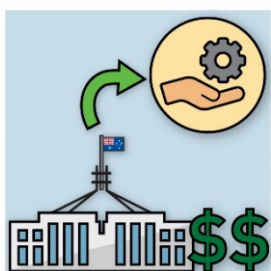


And some ACCOs provide culturally safe health services.

This means they are safe for First Nations cultures.



The researchers heard that ACCOs don't get enough **funding** to provide the support their communities need.



Funding is money from the government to pay for supports and services.

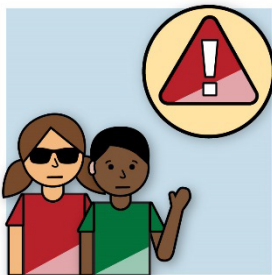


Other organisations can work with First Nations organisations to provide services.

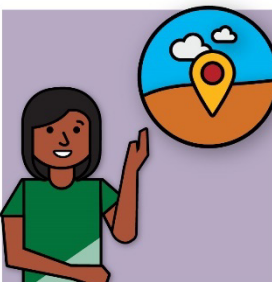
But the way they work together is not fair for First Nations organisations.



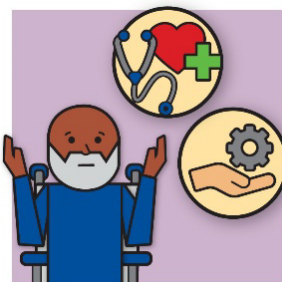
Other organisations can make more money than First Nations organisations.



This can make it harder for First Nations organisations to support their own communities.



The researchers also heard that many First Nations peoples want to get support on their traditional lands.



But they often can't find and use services where they live.

## Making sure services are culturally safe



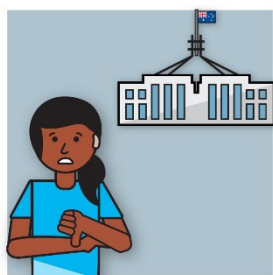
Many First Nations peoples have trauma from things that happened in the past.



These things still affect people now.



This trauma can make life harder for First Nations people with disability in many ways.

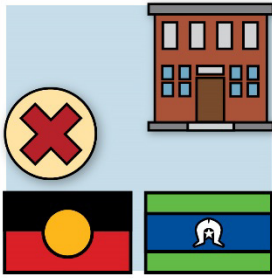


And First Nations people with disability can feel like government services don't care about them.

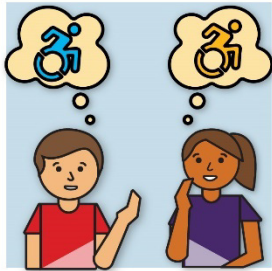


Non-Indigenous organisations often don't understand what:

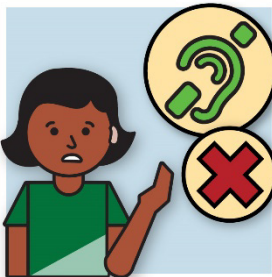
- First Nations people with disability need
- First Nations communities need.



Other people run non-Indigenous organisations, not First Nations peoples.

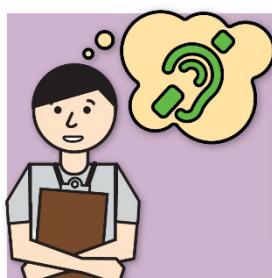


First Nations peoples sometimes have a different idea about what disability is.



For example, many First Nations people who are deaf don't think it is a disability.

But to get support, they have to use disability services.



This means they have to think about being deaf the same way their provider does.

Instead of how they think about it in their community.



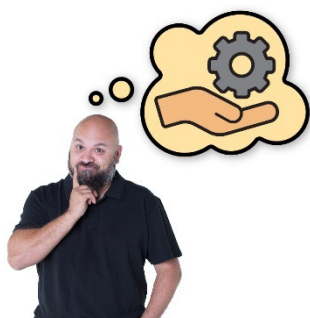
The disability sector should support First Nations peoples by:

- working out who can use disability services
- explaining disability in their communities.

## Changing how to provide services



The researchers heard that state and territory governments need to think about what people in different areas need.



And they need to let people in those areas decide how to provide services.



The researchers also heard that **guardianship** does not work well for First Nations people with disability.



Guardianship is when you have a person who makes decisions for you.

We call this person a guardian.

## Things organisations must do

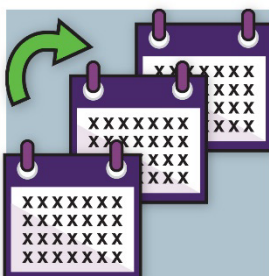


Organisations that provide services must report to the government.

For example, they must report:

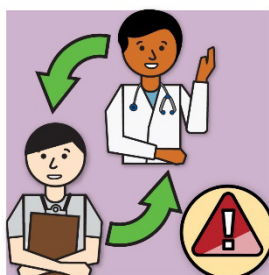


- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.



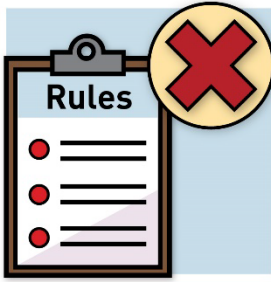
Reporting these things can take up a lot of time.

And make it hard for organisations that support First Nations people with disability.



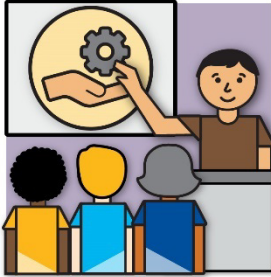
The researchers also heard that First Nations peoples often miss out when they have to move between:

- the disability sector
- other sectors, like health care.

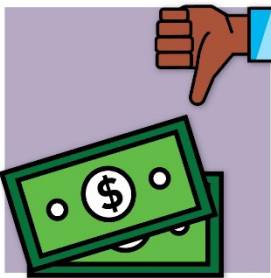


And there are no rules about how to provide services that are:

- culturally safe
- good quality.

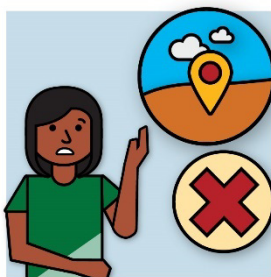


There are also no rules to make sure organisations train people to think about culture when they provide services.



The researchers also heard that First Nations people who use the NDIS can't use all of the funding in their NDIS plan.

This might be because:



- organisations don't provide services where First Nations peoples need them

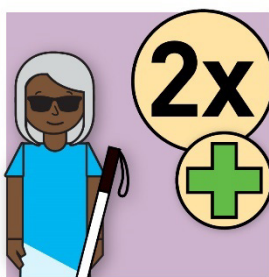


- many services are not culturally safe.

## What did the researchers find out?

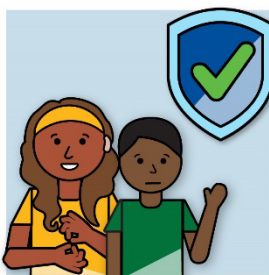


The number of First Nations people in Australia is growing quickly.

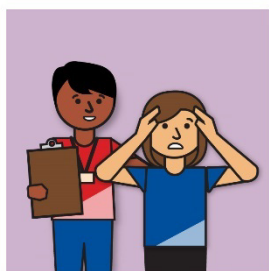


We expect the number of First Nations people with disability using the NDIS to grow twice as fast as other people.

This means the whole disability sector needs to learn how to provide services that:



- are culturally safe



- can support people with trauma.



These issues will become bigger over time.

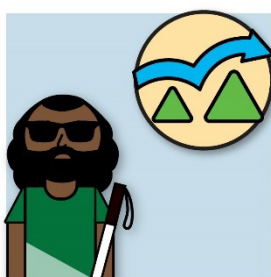


The disability sector must change now.

## What do the researchers recommend?



When the researchers **recommend** something, they say how to make things better.



They thought about the challenges First Nations people with disability face.



This includes how other people often make decisions about their lives.

They don't always have a say.

## A new agency



The researchers recommend making a new group to guide the First Nations disability sector.

We call this group the **Agency**.

An agency is a group of people who work towards the same goal.

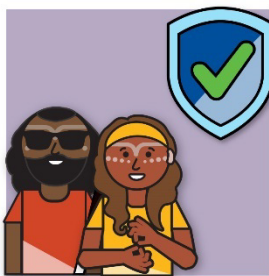


The Agency will help the government work well with the disability sector.

The Agency should:



- improve how the sector provides services



- make sure services are safe for First Nations people.



First Nations people should guide the Agency.

## What the Agency should do



The researchers recommend the Agency writes a **policy**.

A policy is:

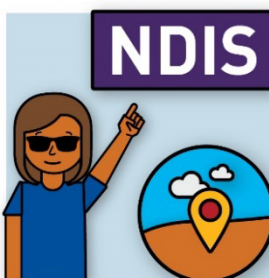
- a government plan for how to do things
- where rules come from.



The policy should be about how to build the disability sector so it supports First Nations people with disability.



The Agency should also make sure **Community Connectors** work the same way across Australia.



Community Connectors help First Nations peoples very far away from cities and towns:

- learn about the NDIS
- connect with the NDIS.



Community Connectors should provide  
NDIS **assessments**:

- in person
- in culturally safe ways
- in the community.



An NDIS assessment is a way to work out:

- how someone's disability affects their life
- what funding they need from the NDIS.



The Agency should also create a program that helps community organisations learn how to manage their business as it grows.



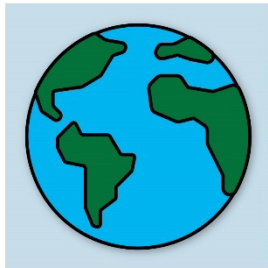
The Agency should make an easy way for First Nations support workers around Australia to:

- get support
- share information.

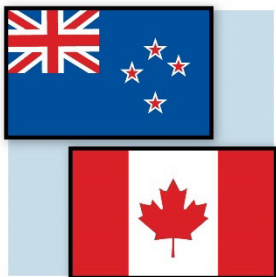


The Agency should:

- look into how governments use guardianship
- find out how guardianship affects First Nations people with disability.

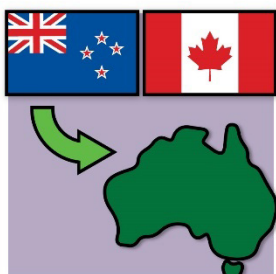


They should also learn how other countries support indigenous peoples with disability.



For example:

- New Zealand
- Canada.



This can help the Agency:

- learn new things that work in these countries
- share things that can work in Australia.

## What the NDIA should do



The researchers recommend that the NDIA gives funding to ACCOs in areas that need more providers.



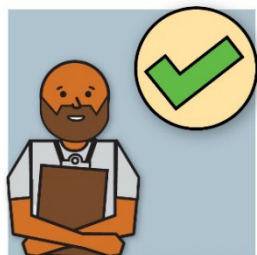
The NDIA should work with organisations that support First Nations people with disability:

- in all parts of their lives
- outside the disability sector.



The NDIA should update the NDIS Workforce Plan 2021–2025.

The plan should explain how to make sure:



- there are enough First Nations support workers



- the disability sector grows fast enough.



The NDIA should also make a guide about the best ways for First Nations providers and non-Indigenous providers to work together.



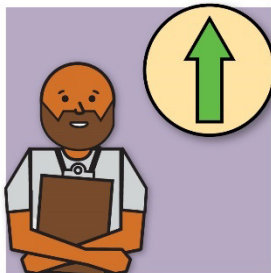
The researchers recommend making more courses for people who want to become NDIS providers.



The NDIA should also give funding to ACCOs to provide education programs.

These programs should support First Nations people to start working in the disability sector.

## What the Australian Government should do



The researchers recommend the Australian Government grows the number of First Nations support workers.

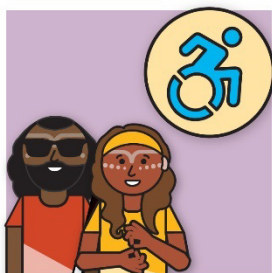
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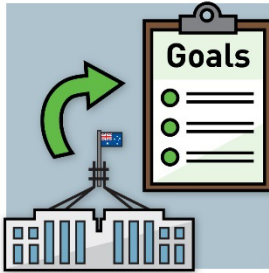
The disability sector will need 13,000 more workers to support First Nations people with disability by 2031.



The Australian Government should also use funding to start a research plan that First Nations peoples would run.



The First Peoples Disability Network explained how this plan should work.



The Australian Government has a plan about how they will meet the goals in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

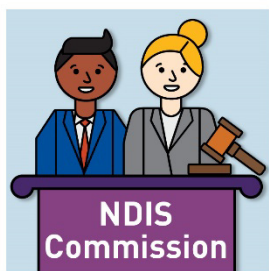


This agreement explains how the government will be fairer to First Nations peoples.



The Australian Government should update their plan to include how they will support First Nations people with disability.

## What the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission should do



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

- are safe
- get good services.

We call them the NDIS Commission.



The researchers recommend that the NDIS Commission should have a First Nations Disability **Commissioner**.

A Commissioner is a senior judge who works on the NDIS Commission.



A First Nations Disability Commissioner would make sure First Nations people who take part in the NDIS:

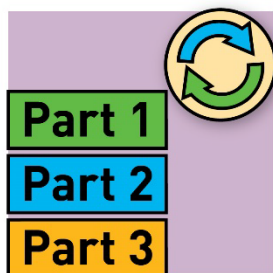
- are safe
- get good services.



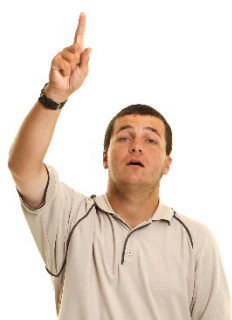
The First Nations Disability Commissioner should create a guide that explains how services can be:

- good quality
- safe.

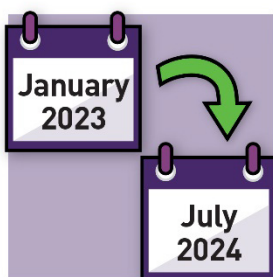
## How should things change?



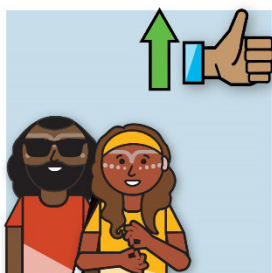
The researchers recommend changing things in 3 parts.



But they also think First Nations peoples should have a say in how this works.



Part 1 should happen between January 2023 and July 2024.

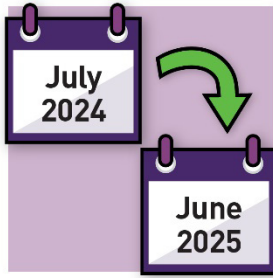


This part includes things that:

- are easy to do
- can make things a lot better for First Nations people with disability.



Part 1 should end when the Agency makes the Community Connector program.

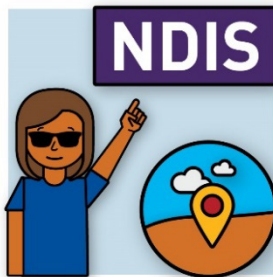


Part 2 should happen between July 2024 and June 2025.

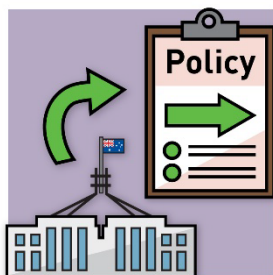
This part includes things that need:



- the Agency



- the Community Connector program.



Part 2 should end when the government creates policies for the disability sector.

These policies should make sure they can support First Nations people with disability into the future.



Part 3 should start in July 2025.



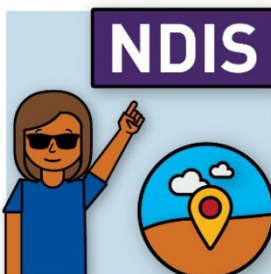
It should include things that can't happen until other things in the disability sector:

- are working well together
- have the community's trust.

This includes:



- the Agency



- the Community Connector program.

## Word list

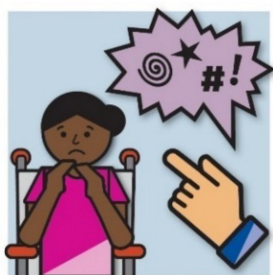
This list explains what the **bold** words in this report mean.



### **Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs)**

ACCOs are organisations that:

- First Nations people run
- support First Nations peoples in the community.



### **Abuse**

Abuse is when someone treats you badly.

### **Advocate**



An advocate is someone who can:

- support you
- help you have your say
- give you information and advice.



## Agency

An agency is a group of people who work towards the same goal.



## Assessment

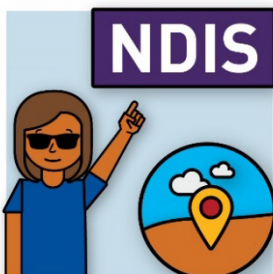
An NDIS assessment is a way to work out:

- how someone's disability affects their life
- what funding they need from the NDIS.



## Commissioner

A Commissioner is a senior judge who works on the NDIS Commission.



## Community Connectors

Community Connectors help First Nations peoples very far away from cities and towns:

- learn about the NDIS
- connect with the NDIS.

## Culture

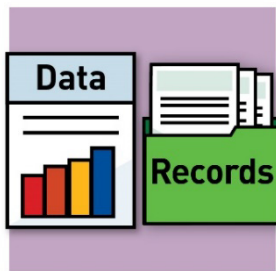
Your culture is:



- your way of life
- how you think or act now because of how you grew up
- your beliefs
- what is important to you.

## Data

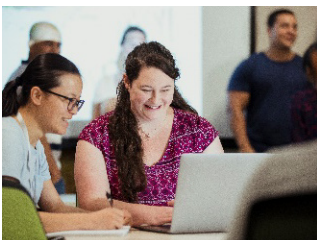
When we talk about data, we mean:



- facts
- information
- records.

## Disability sector

The disability sector includes everyone who delivers services to people with disability, such as:

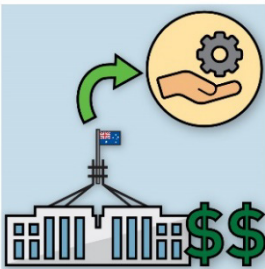


- providers
- support workers
- advocates.



## Exploitation

Exploitation is when someone takes advantage of you.



## Funding

Funding is money from the government to pay for supports and services.



## Guardianship

Guardianship is when you have a person who makes decisions for you.

We call this person a guardian.



## Intersectionality

Intersectionality happens when people treat people with disability differently because of both:

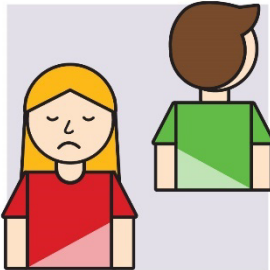
- their disability
- other things about them that they cannot change, like their background or culture.

## NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission)



The NDIS Commission makes sure people with disability who take part in the NDIS:

- are safe
- get good services.



## Neglect

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



## Policy

A policy is:

- a government plan for how to do things
- where rules come from.



## Providers

Providers support people by delivering a service.



## Recommend

When the researchers recommend something, they say how to make things better.



## Trauma

Trauma is the way you feel about something bad that happened to you.

For example, you might feel scared or stressed.

Trauma can affect you for a long time.



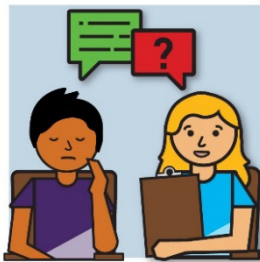
## Violence

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](mailto:helpline@blueknot.org.au)**

## Contact us



You can send us an email.

**[DRcenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:DRcenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au)**

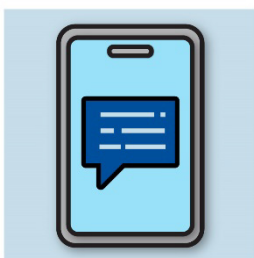


You can call us.

**1800 517 199**



We are available Monday to Friday.



You can also send us a text message.

**0459 906 629**

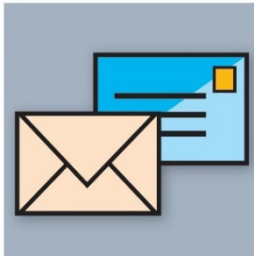


We are not available on public holidays.



You can also call the National Relay Service.

**133 677**



You can write to us at:

GPO Box 1422

Brisbane

QLD 4001

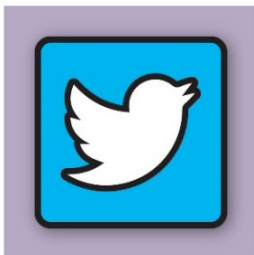
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**Royal Commission**  
into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and  
Exploitation of People with Disability