

**Attention:** The Hon Scott Morrison MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House

20 April 2020

Dear Prime Minister Morrison

**Re: Disability Royal Commission**

I write as the Chairperson of Disability Advocacy Victoria, which is the peak body for independent disability advocacy agencies in Victoria.

Disability Advocacy Victoria writes to you on a subject that we understand has been raised with you previously and is of great concern to people with disabilities and those that stand alongside them in their mission to provide crucial information to the Disability Royal Commission.

As you would be aware, currently confidentiality for those making submissions to the Disability Royal Commission only lasts for the period of the Disability Royal Commission, and no longer. You would also be aware that the subject matter of this Royal Commission is violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation (“abuse”) - matters which are incredibly serious, which include criminal acts against some of the most vulnerable in society.

There are many different people who are at risk by making submissions to the Disability Royal Commission. These include but are not limited to:

- people with disabilities who are suffering abuse in their current circumstances, and who rely on their abusers for their care;
- whistle-blowers: disability support staff, school staff and service staff who are aware of the abuse of children and adults with disabilities in their current work environment;
- parents of children with disabilities who are being abused in settings where their children continue to attend.

Without the protection of ongoing confidentiality, these people will not come forward. If that is the case, the Disability Royal Commission will fail in its mission, being to expose and ideally address, the abuse of Australians with disabilities. Indeed, it is not possible that the government are not aware that the Disability Royal Commission cannot succeed, and will be tarnished, if this issue is not addressed.

We are aware that Parliament, when required, can pass legislation with extraordinary speed. The Disability Royal Commission has been operating for approximately one year. During that time, many people who should have been making submissions to it, have not been due to fear of victimisation, retribution, and other negative repercussions.

While your government should be lauded for establishing the Disability Royal Commission, if it cannot operate in the manner intended due to fear, then its establishment may be seen as disingenuous.

We respectfully request that Parliament address this problem immediately by passing legislation to permanently protect those who wish to contribute confidentially to the Disability Royal Commission.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Goode'.

Karryn Goode, chairperson, Disability Advocacy Victoria Inc.