



Media Release
19 August 2020

No plan, no voice, clumsy solutions for children and young people with disability through COVID-19

Report after report has shown clear gaps for children and young people with disability through COVID-19 planning and response, with significant consequences and harm.

This week sees the first public hearing of the Disability Royal Commission since February focus on the experiences of people with disability through the COVID-19 pandemic. Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA), the national representative organisation for children and young people with disability, will present evidence on Wednesday 19 August as part of a panel about the educational impacts of the pandemic and associated responses.

CYDA and two witnesses with lived experience will speak to the educational and other disruptions experienced by many students with disability through the pandemic, reinforcing the existing inequalities they already face. We will tell the Royal Commission the needs and rights of children and young people with disability were completely unplanned for during the pandemic, despite making up 56% of NDIS participants.

The Commission will hear evidence that despite research showing children and young people generally experience greater trauma and psychological impacts during and after disasters, there has been no national pandemic planning specific for children and young people with disability.

This must change. Governments must listen to children and young people with disability and their representative organisations and act quickly and responsively to mitigate the ongoing impacts of the crisis and prevent long term trauma and harm.

Quotes attributable to Mary Sayers, Chief Executive Officer, Children and Young People with Disability Australia

“Children and young people with disability and their families have lost access to essential services and supplies, received inconsistent and unclear messages from government, and face ongoing exclusion in remote learning”

“This week’s public hearing is an opportunity for people with disability to highlight the planning and response failures they have experienced, and for governments to finally respond.”

“Children and young people with disability and their families are used to hearing about plans and strategies and then seeing very little real change happen. So far COVID-19 has been no different.”

Quote attributable to Tim Chan, young lived experience witness

"Making a submission on the impact of Covid 19 to the DRC has helped to share things I haven't had a chance to talk about. It was good to have the ears of those with the power to help people with disability. It is good to unpack our experiences and to know these experiences will be used to help other disabled people in navigating Covid 19"

Enquiries

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