



Children and Young People
with Disability Australia

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Submissions Team
Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect
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Wednesday, 28 July 2021

To whom it may concern:

RE: Endorsement of ARACY's submission to the Commission, titled *It's not our difference that is the disability: Impact of COVID-19 in Australia on children and young people with disability, and their families*

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) would like to strongly endorse the submission made by ARACY (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth) on 20 July 2021. This submission highlights the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and young people with disability, and their families and caregivers, collecting data from a literature review and three ARACY-CYDA policy roundtables held across 2020 and 2021.

The report finds that "the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing problems with support provided to children and young people with disability and their families. This includes issues that require systems change, including:

- Inclusion – accountability of systems to provide learning, health and social opportunities for all.
- Adaptability – flexibility in systems to adjust to the complexity of people's lives and their needs.
- Knowledge – underlying the above issues, is a lack of knowledge within systems of the lived experience of people with disability and the people that care for them."

CYDA has undertaken significant work examining the impacts of the pandemic on children and young people with disability, including appearing at public hearing 5 in August 2020. Our own research with our community over the past 18 months reflects the findings of this report, highlighting significant areas of policy neglect for children and young people with disability during the pandemic.

While the Commission's *Public Hearing 5 Experiences of people with disability during the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic Report* made a number of recommendations in relation to the Australian Government's response to the pandemic, this report from ARACY highlights the enduring challenges and disadvantage that children and young people with disability face.



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We are keen for the Disability Royal Commission to make strong recommendations about pandemic and emergency planning, preparedness, response, and recovery that is inclusive of the particular needs of children and young people with disability, which research shows are largely unplanned for and missed in these processes. This emergency planning preparedness, response and recovery needs to include all levels of government – Australian, state/territory and local governments – alongside disability representative organisations such as CYDA and other state-based organisations.

In order to ensure effective processes that prevent further disadvantage for our community, all of these stakeholders have an important role to play in ameliorating the risks that occur in pandemics and emergencies.

We commend this report to the Commission.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Sayers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Sayers
Chief Executive Officer