



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

Research Report

The complaint process

**Ways people with disability can report violence, abuse, neglect
and exploitation**

Easy Read version



November 2022

How to use this report

3 people wrote this report for the Disability Royal Commission (the Royal Commission):



- Dr Dinesh Wadiwel from the University of Sydney



- Dr Claire Spivakovsky from the University of Melbourne



- Dr Linda Steele from the University of Technology Sydney.

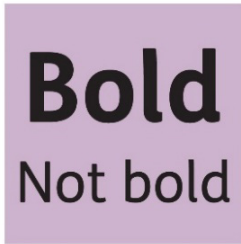


When you see the word 'we', it means the Royal Commission.



We wrote this report in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.



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 31.



This Easy Read report is a summary of a report called *Complaint Mechanisms: Reporting Pathways for Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation*.

A summary only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other report on our website.

disability.royalcommission.gov.au/research



You can ask for help to read this report.

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

What's in this report?

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What's this report about?

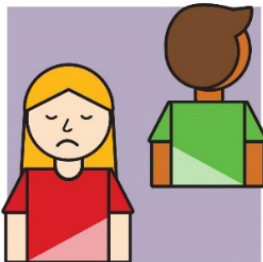
Lots of people with disability might report:



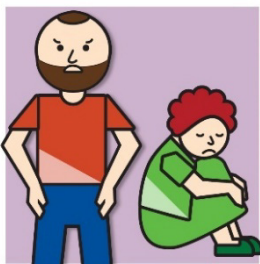
- **violence** – when someone hurts you physically



- **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.



People with disability might make a **complaint** to report these things.



When someone makes a complaint, they report a bad experience to:

- a government department
- an organisation that handles complaints
- an organisation that provides services.

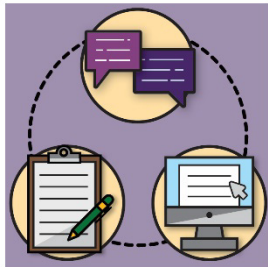


We know that some people with disability don't get support to help them make a complaint.

And we know some people with disability don't get support after they make a complaint.



This report is about how to make the **complaint process** better for people with disability.

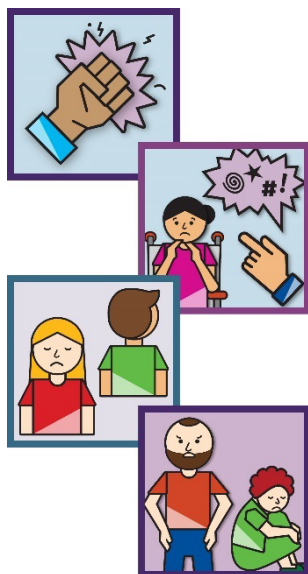


The complaint process is:

- how a person makes a complaint
- what happens after they make a complaint.

How did we do our research?

We read other research about how people with disability make a complaint about:



- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.

This helped us understand:



- laws about making a complaint

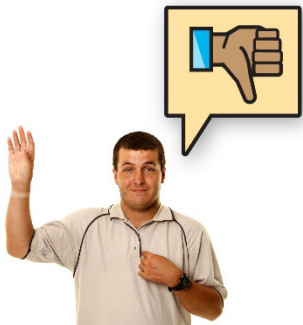


- different ways people can make a complaint.

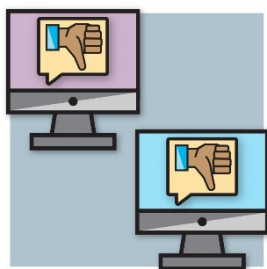


And it helped us understand what **rights** people with disability have to make a complaint.

Rights are rules about how everyone should be treated fairly and equally.



We learnt about the experiences people with disability had when they made a complaint.



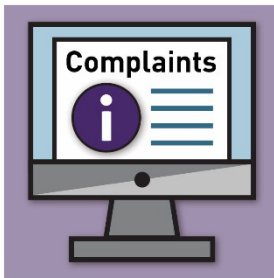
We found out about the places where people could make a complaint.

For example, on different organisations' websites.

This helped us work out:



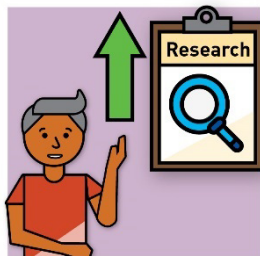
- how people can make a complaint



- what information organisations give to people to help them make a complaint.

What affected our research?

We need more research about how people with disability report:

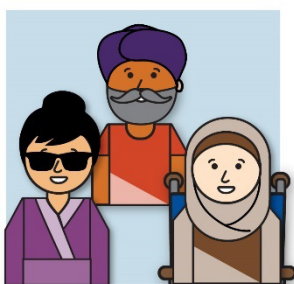


- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.

This includes research about:



- First Nations peoples with disability



- **culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD)** people with disability.



CaLD people:

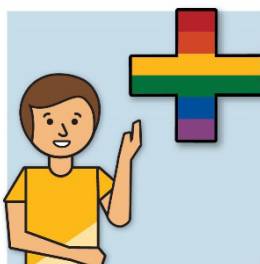
- come from different backgrounds
- speak a language other than English.



And it includes research about **LGBTIQ+** people with disability.



LGBTIQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer or questioning.



The '+' is for people who are part of the LGBTIQ+ community but don't talk about themselves using a word from this list.

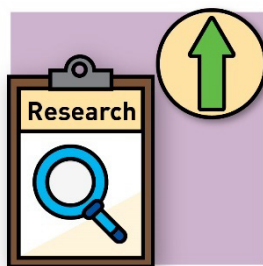
Our research doesn't focus on:



- how well different organisations manage complaints



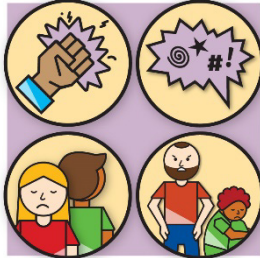
- how people with disability report violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation to the police.



We need to do more research about these things in the future.

What did we learn from our research?

Why violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation might happen



There are different reasons why violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation might happen.



These things might happen because people have bad **attitudes** towards people with disability.

Attitudes are what we think, feel and believe.



They might happen because it's part of the law.

For example, using restraints – ways to stop someone from doing something.

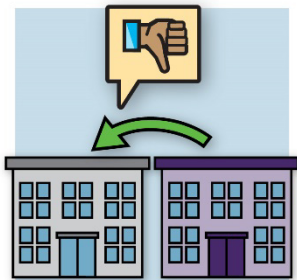


Sometimes, the complaint process doesn't help people with disability when they report:

- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.



This means some organisations might not stop these things from happening again.



There are some organisations that handle complaints about other organisations.



This means people with disability might get good results if they make a complaint.



For example, the organisation will tell the other organisation they must do a better job stopping violence.

How the complaint process works with the justice system



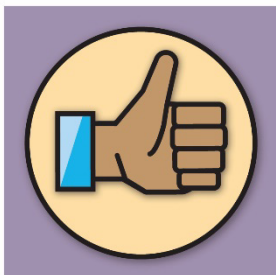
The **justice system** includes:

- police and prisons
- the courts and law.

People with disability have the right to find and use services in the justice system so they can:



- report violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation



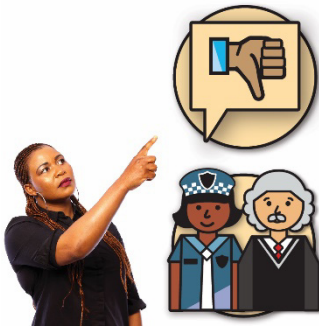
- get good results after they report these things.



Some people with disability have bad experiences with the justice system.

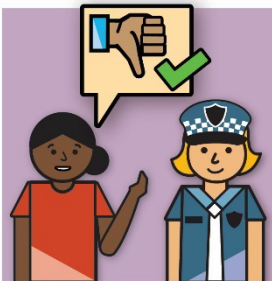


This means some people with disability don't report violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation to the police.



People with disability can use the complaint process instead of the justice system.

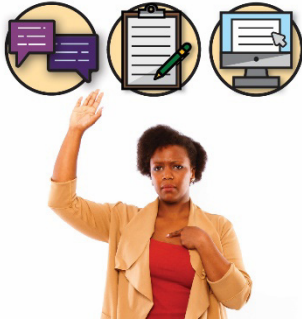
But if the complaint process works well with the justice system, people with disability have more chances to report:



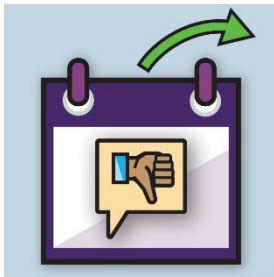
- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.

Making the complaint process better

Some people with disability who made a complaint to the justice system had bad experiences with:



- the complaint process



- what happened after they made a complaint.



This means they might not get a good result.

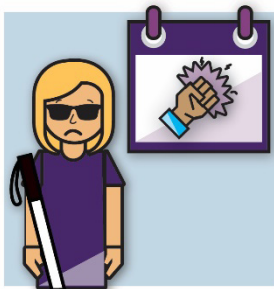


It also means something bad might happen to them because they made a complaint.



Some people with disability keep having bad experiences in their life when they can't report:

- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.



For example, some people with disability might experience abuse each day because they can't report it.



There are problems with the information people can find and use about the complaint process.

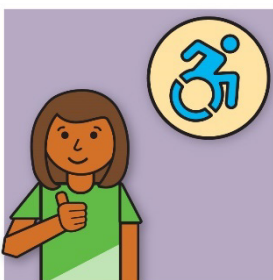


For example, there can be missing information about the complaint process.

The complaint process can be better if:



- there are clear ways people can report violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation

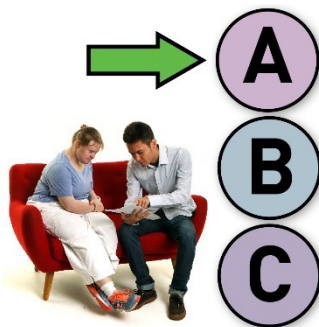


- they are **accessible**.

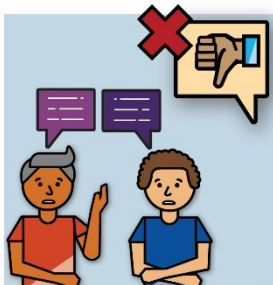


When something is accessible, it is easy to:

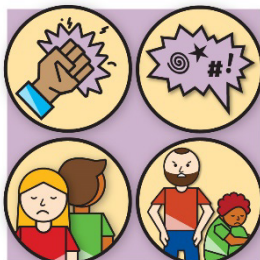
- understand
- find and use.



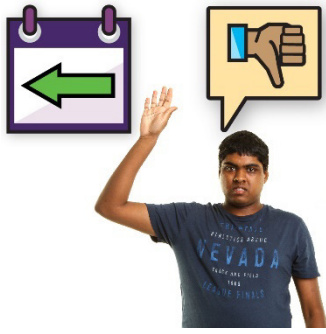
People with disability should be able to get support to make decisions when they make a complaint.



Some organisations tell people they should fix their problems with the other person first before they make a complaint.

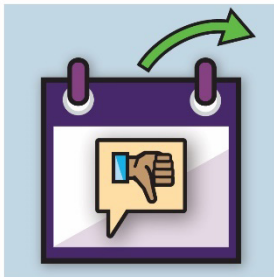


This includes when they want to make a complaint about violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.



The complaint process should also let people with disability report experiences they had in the past.

Some complaint processes don't have information about:



- what happens after someone makes a complaint



- the results of the complaint.

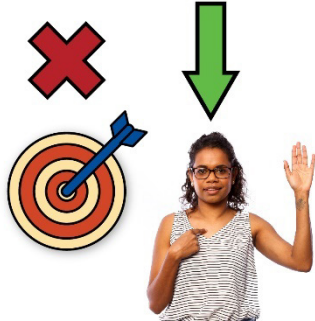


Organisations with a complaint process should share the results of a complaint with the community.

This means everyone knows what they will do.

What could change to work better?

An independent complaint process



When a complaint process is **independent**, it doesn't focus on the organisation's goals.

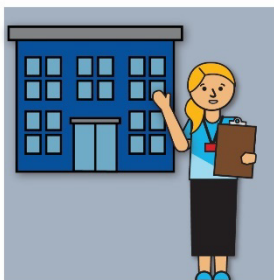
It focuses on the person making the complaint.



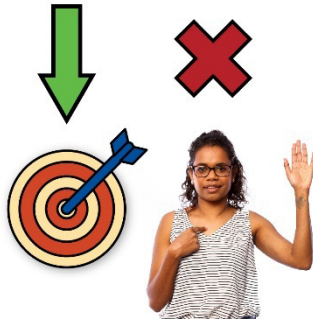
And someone who doesn't work for the organisation runs the complaint process.



There are lots of ways people with disability can report violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.



But some of these complaint processes aren't independent.



When this happens, organisations might focus on their own goals, instead of the person who made the complaint.



Some people with disability don't trust the complaint process if it's not independent.

This is because they think the complaints process might not do a good job supporting them.

What makes a good independent complaint process?



An independent complaint process would protect the rights of people with disability.



It would also work across different organisations.
This includes different governments.



An independent complaint process would support people to report to the justice system.

But only if the person who made the complaint wants to.

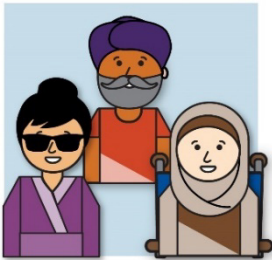


An independent complaint process would support all people with disability.

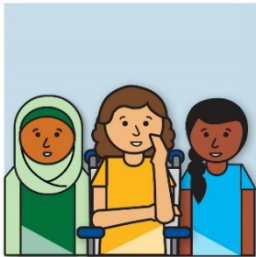
This includes:



- First Nations peoples with disability



- CaLD people with disability



- women and children with disability



- older people with disability



- LGBTIQ+ people with disability.

The National Redress Scheme

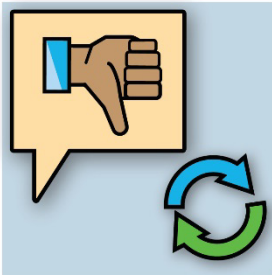


Lots of people with disability have experienced violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation a long time ago.

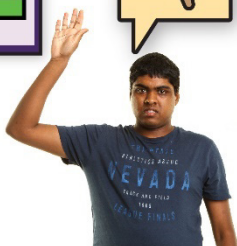


But they didn't report it for a long time.

Or they didn't report it at all.

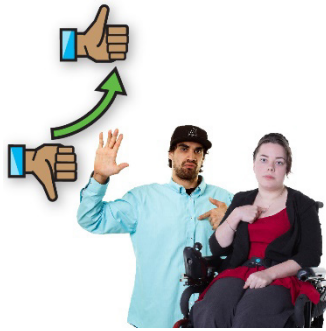


The complaint process should change to support people with disability who experienced these things a long time ago.



If we have a National Redress Scheme, it means people with disability can share their experience from a long time ago.

A **National Redress Scheme** is a way to make things better for people who experienced:



- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.

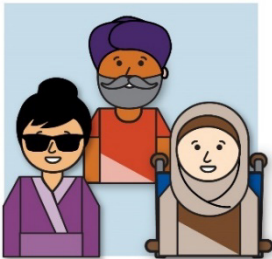


A National Redress Scheme would support all people with disability.

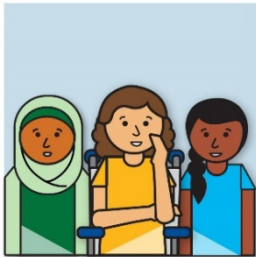
This includes:



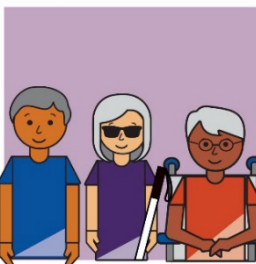
- First Nations peoples with disability



- CaLD people with disability



- women and children with disability



- older people with disability



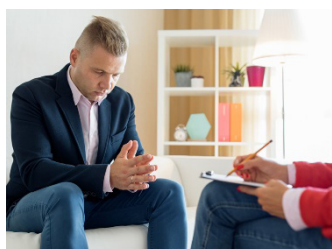
- LGBTIQ+ people with disability.

Making the justice system better at managing complaints

We understand that the justice system needs to change to support people with disability better when they report:



- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.



This includes how the justice system manages the complaint.

It also includes how long they take to do it.



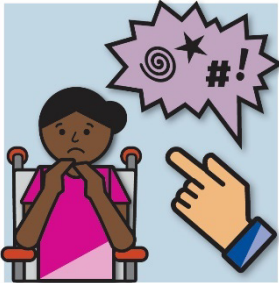
If this happens, people with disability might trust the justice system more.



And people with disability might report violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation to the justice system.

Word list

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



Abuse

Abuse is when someone treats you badly.



Accessible

When something is accessible, it is easy to:

- understand
- find and use.



Attitudes

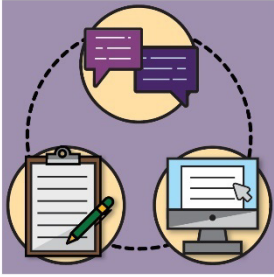
Attitudes are what we think, feel and believe.



Complaint

When someone makes a complaint, they report a bad experience to:

- an organisation
- a government.



Complaint process

The complaint process is:

- how a person makes a complaint
- what happens after they make a complaint.



CaLD

CaLD people:

- come from different backgrounds
- speak a language other than English.



Exploitation

Exploitation is when someone takes advantage of you.



Justice system

Justice system includes:

- police and prisons
- the courts and law.

LGBTIQ+



LGBTIQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer or questioning.

The '+' is for people who are part of the LGBTIQ+ community but don't talk about themselves using a word from this list.

Independent



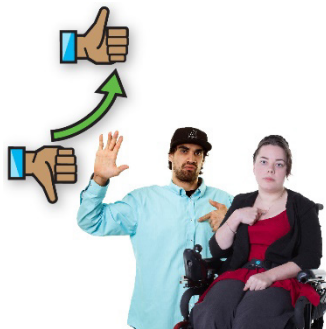
When a complaint process is independent, it doesn't focus on the organisation's goals.

It focuses on the person making the complaint.

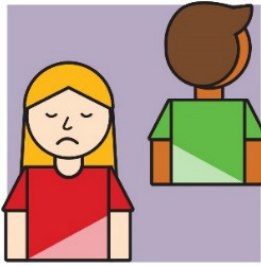
And someone who doesn't work for the organisation runs the complaint process.

National Redress Scheme

A National Redress Scheme is a way is to make things better for people who experienced:



- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.



Neglect

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



Rights

Rights are rules about how everyone should be treated fairly and equally.



Violence

Violence is when someone hurts you physically.

Contact us



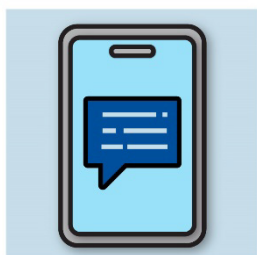
You can email us.

DRcenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au



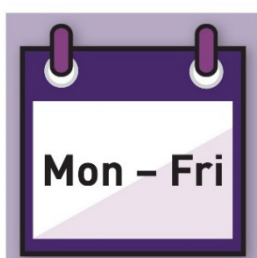
If you have a question, you can call us.

1800 517 199



You can also send us a text message.

0459 906 629



We are available on Monday to Friday.

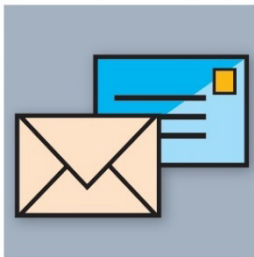


We are not available on public holidays.



You can also call the National Relay Service.

133 677



You can write to us.

GPO Box 1422

Brisbane

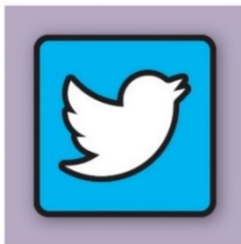
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