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| Disabled People's Organisations Australia Media release |

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| 18 February 2019 |

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| **Royal Commission vote welcome  -  now time to make it happen** |

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| People with disability, and our organisations, today welcome the vote in the Australian Parliament about a Royal Commission into the epidemic of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect against people with disability. The next step is to make the Royal Commission real.“We welcome today's vote on a Royal Commission into the violence, abuse and neglect that is a devastating reality in many of our lives,” said Therese Sands, Co-CEO of People with Disability Australia, a member of Disabled People’s Organisations Australia (DPO Australia)."However, we are concerned that there was not a definite announcement or timeframe to establish a Royal Commission, nor a commitment to look at the breadth of issues we have raised with the Federal Government over many years."“We have fought for a standalone Royal Commission on this issue for decades and we are ready to work with the Federal Government to make the Royal Commission happen as soon as possible.”“A Royal Commission is essential due to the violence that has impacted many of our lives, causing trauma, harm and even death,” said Carolyn Frohmader, Executive Director of Women With Disabilities Australia, a member of DPO Australia.“Women with disability experience higher rates of violence, including sexual violence than non-disabled women. We need to make sure that the Royal Commission takes an intersectional approach to the examination of violence, including gender, age, sexual orientation, intersex status and race,” said Ms Frohmader.“The specific issues that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability must also be addressed by this Royal Commission, including extensive consultation with Aboriginal controlled organisations of people with disability, particularly given the over-representation of Aboriginal people in care, in prison and living in institutions,” said Damian Griffis, CEO of First Peoples Disability Network Australia, (a member of DPO Australia).“People with disability from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds must have equal access to the Royal Commission, with appropriate supports, translations to make sure our voices are heard,” said Dwayne Cranfield, CEO, National Ethnic Disability Alliance (a member of DPO Australia).“This Royal Commission must cover all the places where people with disability live, work and play, including schools, prisons, homes, hospitals, mental health facilities as well as all disability support institutions and organisations, not just in the disability sector,” said Ms Sands.“We need a Royal Commission because it has the power to compel witnesses and representatives of service systems to appear and be cross-examined under oath and thoroughly examine forms of violence that are specific to people with disability, which have been ignored in most other inquiries.”In 2015, a [Senate inquiry](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Violence_abuse_neglect) found widespread rates of violence and abuse against people with disability, and strongly recommended holding a Royal Commission, and in 2017, [over 160 civil society groups](http://dpoa.org.au/civil-society-statement-rc/) and [over 100 academics](https://disabilityroyalcommissionnow.wordpress.com/2017/04/05/open-letter/) joined the call for a Royal Commission into violence against people with disability. “We look forward to a thorough and in-depth consultation with people with disability on the Terms of Reference for the Commission, which must prioritise our voices and experiences, and grant powers to look into all forms of violence against people with disability in all settings, all contexts, all circumstances and across all age groups,” said Ms Frohmader. |

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| **More information:**El GibbsManager Media and Campaigns. People with Disability Australia0408 682 867media@pwd.org.au **Disabled People’s Organisations Australia**Disabled People’s Organisations Australia (DPO Australia) is an alliance of four national DPOs.  DPOs are organisations that are led by and constituted of people with disability. The key purpose of the DPO Australia is to promote, protect and advance the human rights and freedoms of people with disability in Australia by working collaboratively on areas of shared interests, purposes and strategic priorities and opportunities. DPO Australia is made up of four national population specific and cross-disability DPOs that have been funded by the Australian Government to represent the views of people with disability and provide advice to Government/s and other stakeholders.  The four DPO Australia members are *First People’s Disability Network*; *People with Disability Australia*; *National Ethnic Disability Alliance* and *Women With Disabilities Australia.*For further information about Disabled People’s Organisation Australia (DPOA) visit: [www.dpoa.org.au](https://pwd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9b4dc5c4cde2d6162dcb52396&id=208e43946f&e=50631f2388)* For further information about People with Disability Australia (PWDA) visit [www.pwda.org.au](https://pwd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9b4dc5c4cde2d6162dcb52396&id=e017a6b166&e=50631f2388)
* For further information on First People’s Disability Network visit [www.fpdn.org.au](https://pwd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9b4dc5c4cde2d6162dcb52396&id=b91f2689e2&e=50631f2388)
* For further information on the National Ethnic Disability Alliance visit: [www.neda.org.au](https://pwd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9b4dc5c4cde2d6162dcb52396&id=4f063f8ad1&e=50631f2388)
* For further information on Women With Disability Australia visit: [www.wwda.org.au](https://pwd.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9b4dc5c4cde2d6162dcb52396&id=c924512803&e=50631f2388)
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