



# Companion Card *Catch Up*

July 2020

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To receive *Catch Up*  
by email call us on  
1800 893 044 or email  
[info.companioncard@facss.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info.companioncard@facss.nsw.gov.au)

## Welcome to Winter

NSW businesses have reopened after the COVID-19 shut down. So now you can make use of your Companion Card again.

However as the Coronavirus has not gone away so it is still important to remember to look after yourself and others.

Since our last edition the Disability Information Helpline has been established to provide information and referrals to people with disabilities about the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Visit the website at [www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/](http://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/)



**You can call the Helpline on 1800 643 787  
from Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm.**

## COVID-19 Information

Public health orders change in response to the movement of the virus. The NSW Government COVID-19 website contains up to date information and links to resources to assist you with every aspect of your life. <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19>

Follow the rules and stay safe whether you are working, visiting family and friends, or going out.

**People with Disability Australia** have created a COVID-19 Hub with disability-focused information including national and international resources.

<https://pwd.org.au/covid-19-hub/>

**The Council for Intellectual Disability** (CID) has prepared some Easy Read resources on how people can stay safe, healthy and happy during COVID19.

<https://cid.org.au/covid-19/>

**IDEAS** is run by people with disability for people with disability. Their Coronavirus pandemic page contains clear information about COVID-19 and what it means for you.

<https://www.ideas.org.au/blogs/covid19-information-for-people-with-a-disability-start-here.html>

**Every Australian Counts** has created web pages specifically around the NDIS and the Coronavirus. It is community focused with simple easy to read guides.

<https://everyaustraliancounts.com.au/ndis-coronavirus-resources/>

### Feeling unwell?

If you develop a fever, cough, sore or scratchy throat, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, seek medical attention. **Call the National Coronavirus Helpline [1800 020 080](tel:1800020080)** (24-hour help line).

## Together against COVID-19



Stay home as  
much as possible



Don't go out  
if you are sick



Wash your  
hands regularly



Connect with  
loved ones online

## Audio Description begins in Australia

Following a \$2 million funding injection from the federal government, the ABC and SBS have introduced an audio description service for audiences who are blind or vision impaired.

Audio description (AD) is the auditory narration of a TV program. AD describes important visual elements of a television program, movie or performance between lines of dialogue. It is particularly beneficial to people who are blind and vision-impaired.

Audio description is most appropriate for dramas, documentaries and movies, which have sufficient gaps in dialogue for the insertion of audio description. News, as a genre, is not suitable to be audio described, as there are insufficient gaps in spoken elements of the program. Similarly, current affairs and sport programming will not include Audio Description.

Both the ABC and SBS will deliver approximately 14 hours each of shows every week that have audio description, supported by features designed to ensure all audiences are aware of when this programming is available. This includes an audio chime and on-air notification alerting audiences to audio description being provided for a program about to be broadcast.



Audio description is available on selected programming on the ABC Main Channel, ABC ME, ABC COMEDY and ABC Kids.

ABC audio-described programs can be found at [www.abc.net.au/tv/audiodescription](http://www.abc.net.au/tv/audiodescription)

Email: [ad@your.abc.net.au](mailto:ad@your.abc.net.au)

Phone: 139 994 (business hours)



Audio description is available on selected programming on SBS (SD and HD) and SBS VICELAND.

SBS programs can be found at [www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/audio-described-programming](http://www.sbs.com.au/aboutus/audio-described-programming)

Email: [audiodescription@sbs.com.au](mailto:audiodescription@sbs.com.au)

Phone: 1800 500 727 (business hours)



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

## Issues Papers

The Royal Commission is looking for feedback on a number of issues papers. Issues papers ask questions about a topic that is important to the enquiry. You are welcome and invited to send any information you think will help the Royal Commission do its work. Full details can be found at <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/policy-and-research/issues-papers>

### **Rights and Attitudes issues paper**

Looks at the awareness and recognition of the rights of people with disability. This is to learn more about the level of awareness that people with disability, and the wider community, have about the rights of people with disability. The Royal Commission is also interested in attitudes towards people with disability, they want to know more about how those attitudes develop and what can be done to change them.

Responses due by 31 July 2020.

### **Employment issues paper**

Is looking at the experiences of people with disability in employment. The Royal Commission wants to understand why people with disability are less likely to be employed and have lower incomes than people without disability. This paper is also seeking information about people's experiences of discrimination at work and how well specific programs designed to increase the employment of people with disability are working.

Responses due by 14 August 2020.

### **Restrictive Practices issues paper**

Looks at the use and impact of restrictive practices on people with disability. The Royal Commission wants to know about the effects of restrictive practice on people with disability. They are also interested in understanding how laws, policies and practices around restrictive practices can be improved to better prevent and protect people with disability from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Responses due by 28 August 2020.

### **First Nations People with Disability issues paper**

This latest issues paper seeks information about the experiences of First Nations people with disability. The Royal Commission is interested in examples of laws, policies and practices in different settings that are not working or working well. This can be in areas such as education, healthcare, workplaces, the justice system, home, online communities, and families.

Responses due by 11 September 2020.

## Experiences of people with disability during the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Royal Commission proposes to conduct the hearing in Sydney during the week commencing 17 August. The hearing will be closed to the public, but will be accessible via live stream.

The Royal Commission expects to hear evidence from people with disability, peak advocacy groups, public health and disability experts as well as government representatives, and intends to examine whether, in preparing for and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and other entities adequately considered measures to prevent violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability.

### Share your experiences with the Royal Commission.

This helps the Royal Commission learn more about the problem and how to help prevent it in the future. You can share your experiences by making a submission or applying for a private session with a Commissioner.

Hearing from people with disability, families, support people, organisations and the broader community helps the Royal Commission understand the extent and the impact of violence, neglect, abuse and exploitation against people with disability. And help form recommendations to prevent it from happening again.

The Royal Commission acknowledges that coming forward to share your experience is a big step and want to make it as easy as possible. Counselling and support is available to help you.

### Ways to contact the Royal Commission

Email: [DRCEnquiries@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:DRCEnquiries@royalcommission.gov.au)

Phone: 1800 517 199 or 07 3734 1900 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday

Mail: GPO Box 1422, Brisbane Qld 4001

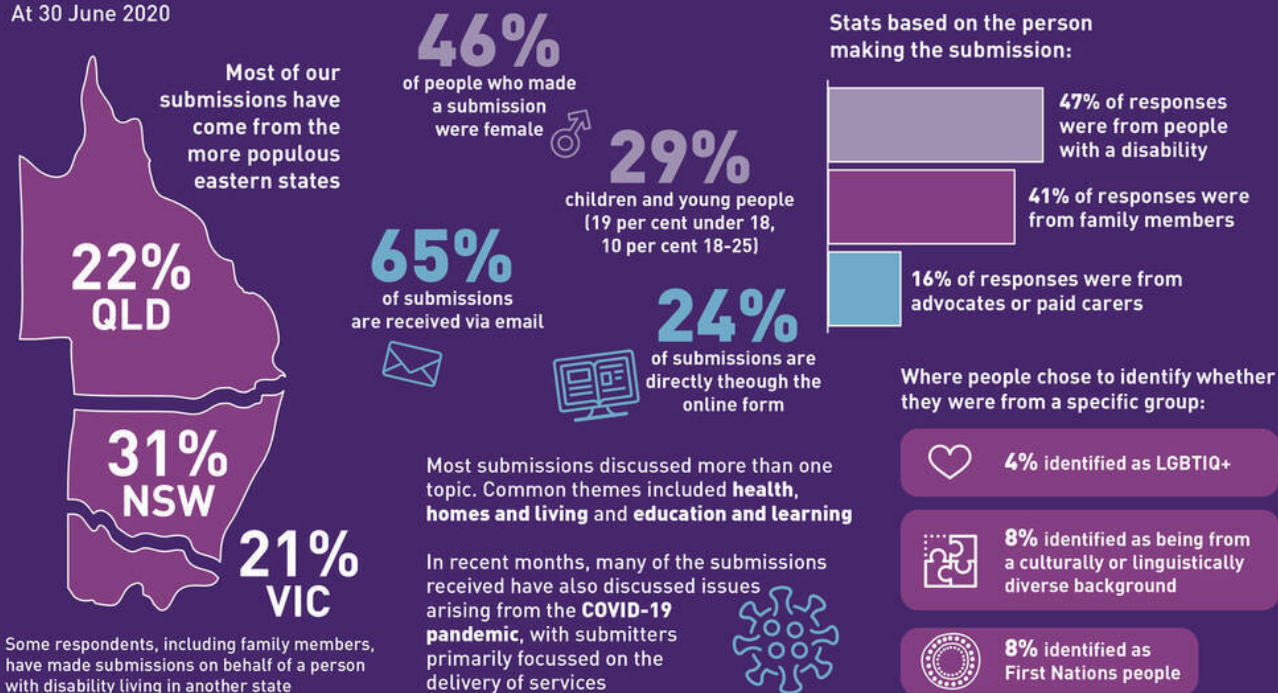
## Breakdown of submissions to the Royal Commission to the end of June 2020.

People do not have to provide demographic data when they make a submission.

We only have demographic data for about half of all submissions we have received, so these figures are representative only.

### 1,141 submissions received

At 30 June 2020





## Inquiry into the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

**Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS will examine systemic and ongoing issues about the operations and framework of the Commission.**

The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission ([www.ndiscommission.gov.au/](http://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/)) is an independent agency established to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services. The Commission is tasked with regulating NDIS providers, resolving problems and identifying areas for improvement.

If you have reported something to the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission, made a complaint or have any ideas about what would make the system work better, the Committee wants to hear from you.

**Submissions Close: 31 July 2020.**

Every Australian Counts (<https://everyaustraliancounts.com.au/>) has all the information about the Inquiry on their website as well as how to make an individual submission or be part of their joint submission.

Every Australian Counts is a campaign run by the National Disability & Carer Alliance (<https://ndcalliance.org.au/>) to make sure the NDIS delivers on its promise to people with disability.

The Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme  
([www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/Joint/National\\_Disability\\_Insurance\\_Scheme](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Disability_Insurance_Scheme))

Committee Secretariat contact:

PO Box 6100, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600.

Phone: +61 2 6277 3083 Email: [ndis.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:ndis.sen@aph.gov.au)



**As of 1 July all entertainment businesses can open with the exception of night clubs and music festivals. However due to the 4 square metre per person rule not all venues will operate in the same way as prior to the shutdown. We recommend checking the website or phoning the venue prior to attending.**

#### **Ticketek and Ticketmaster**

Both of these booking agencies have extensive lists of cancelled and postponed events. A number of performances have been rescheduled starting September 2020.

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Cinemas have reopened with physical distancing so booking in advance is advised.

**Hoyts** <https://www.hoyts.com.au/>

**Event** <https://www.eventcinemas.com.au/>

**Palace** <https://www.palacecinemas.com.au/>

**Dendy** <https://www.dendy.com.au/>

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**“ Try to keep in touch with friends and family every day – you need support and connection now more than ever. This can be as simple as phone calls and text messages, or you can set up video chats or group chats. ”**



**Pam Webster**  
NSW Carers Advisory Council

**Caring for carers during COVID-19**

[coronavirus.dcj.nsw.gov.au](https://coronavirus.dcj.nsw.gov.au)

**Do you know of business that doesn't accept the Companion Card but you feel they should?**

**Let us know and we will contact them to discuss.**

We are always looking for new businesses to add to the Companion Card Affiliate list.

Just email us with the details to [affiliates.companioncard@fac.s.nsw.gov.au](mailto:affiliates.companioncard@fac.s.nsw.gov.au)



### **Contact NSW Companion Card**

**Phone: 1800 893 044** Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm

Email:

For Application enquiries:  
[applications.companioncard@fac.s.nsw.gov.au](mailto:applications.companioncard@fac.s.nsw.gov.au)

For Affiliates:

[affiliates.companioncard@fac.s.nsw.gov.au](mailto:affiliates.companioncard@fac.s.nsw.gov.au)

For all other enquiries:

[info.companioncard@fac.s.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info.companioncard@fac.s.nsw.gov.au)

Post: Companion Card, Locked Bag 4028, Ashfield  
NSW 1800

This newsletter was sent by Card Operations, Department of Communities and Justice, Locked Bag 4028, Ashfield NSW 1800.

**Need to replace your Companion Card?**

**If your card has expired, is lost or damaged, there is no need to fill out a form. Simply call us on 1800 893 044 or email [info.companioncard@fac.s.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info.companioncard@fac.s.nsw.gov.au)**

**No more expiry dates on NSW Companion Card.**

**Adult Companion Cards are issued for life, and since July 2018 they have been printed without an expiry date.**

**New Companion Cards never expire.**