

'Today is a day for action': Down Syndrome Australia urges immediate action on Royal Commission

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Down Syndrome Australia has responded to Federal Parliament's support for a Royal Commission into institutional abuse of people with a disability by urging the Government to act immediately.

"This is an important day for people with disability," said DSA Chief Executive Dr Ellen Skladzien.

"It is also an important day for the families and advocates of people with disability. For too long, violence and abuse against people with a disability has been overlooked.

"Down Syndrome Australia welcomes the bipartisan support expressed in Parliament today for a Royal Commission into institutional abuse of people with a disability.

"But it has to be said: we have waited long enough. Today is a day for action. The Royal Commission needs to be established now," Dr Skladzien said.

Down Syndrome Australia expects this Royal Commission will provide a comprehensive, independent review into repeated issues of abuse.

"It will enable people with a disability to tell their stories and will provide justice for victims," Dr Skladzien said.

"It will also make important recommendations on reform, policy, and practices to address issues of abuse."

As a member of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Down Syndrome Australia has long supported the establishment of a Royal Commission.

"A 2015 Senate Inquiry into violence, abuse and neglect against people with disability in institutional and residential settings found that abuse against people with a disability was 'epidemic'," Dr Skladzien said.

"Recent media reports provided further evidence of the persistent problems occurring in some residential settings.

"This Royal Commission sends a powerful message to the community about the seriousness of the abuse of people with disability," Dr Skladzien said.



ABOUT DOWN SYNDROME AUSTRALIA

Down Syndrome Australia was established in 2011 as the peak body for people with Down syndrome in Australia. Our purpose is to influence social and policy change, and provide a national profile and voice for people living with Down syndrome. We work collaboratively with the state and territory Down syndrome associations to achieve our mission. More information about the work of Down Syndrome Australia and the contact details for local support and services can be found at www.downsyndrome.org.au.

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