

Ensuring the well-being of all Victorians with disability

October 2026

The Uniting Church affirms that:
(a) Christ is most fully present when all people in the Body are unconditionally accepted as people of worth. All people are created in the image of God, including people with disability;
(b) along with all members, the faith, gifts, hopes and dreams of people with disability are to be valued and honoured; and
(c) God is a God of justice and peace, who seeks reconciliation amongst all people.
Part of a resolution passed by the 15th Triennial National Assembly meeting of the Uniting Church in 2018.

The Justice and International Mission Cluster has been working with Victorian Disabled People's Organisations, seeking reforms to improve the lives of Victorians with disability. Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) are grassroots organisations run by disabled people and are responsible to the community. They have five key asks:

1. Make government engagement with people with disability fair, accessible, and meaningful;
2. Act promptly to implement recommendations from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability;
3. Reform guardianship laws so that disabled people keep control over their own lives;
4. Create a plan to move away from group homes and institutions; and,
5. Create a specialist disability complaints and regulation body.

Making government engagement with people with disability fair, accessible, and meaningful

The needs of the disability community should shape the systems designed to support them. For too long, the Victorian government has treated consultation as a tick-box exercise. Genuine engagement and co-design give the disability community a real say in laws, policies, systems, and services that affect their lives. The Victorian government should adopt and use the *Disability Standards for Engagement.* The *Standards* are a set of basic rules for how government should work with the disability community.

Acting on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

The Royal Commission ran from April 2019 to September 2023. The Victorian Government has ignored or delayed implementing most of the recommendations. The Victorian Government must commit to meaningful action on the Disability Royal Commission recommendations that remain unaddressed. The Victorian Government should work with Disabled People's Organisations Victoria (DPOV) and disability advocacy organisations on implementing the recommendations.

Reform guardianship laws so that disabled people keep control over their own lives

Guardianship laws apply when a tribunal or court decides that a disabled person can't make informed decisions for themselves. When this happens, a different person is put in charge and makes decisions for that disabled person. This can include decisions about where people live or what medical treatment they receive. The Royal Commission recommended major changes to guardianship laws so disabled people are supported to make their own decisions wherever possible. Such reform would give disabled people greater autonomy, dignity, and control over decisions about their own lives.

Create a plan to move away from group homes and institutions

The Royal Commission recommended a 15-year plan to phase out institutions, group homes, and other shared disability settings, and move toward inclusive, person-centred housing. The Royal Commission found that an extremely high number of people experienced abuse, neglect, and human rights violations

in shared accommodation settings across Australia. The Victorian Government has not committed to this recommendation. They said they would consider it further, but no action has followed.

Create a specialist disability complaints and regulation body
The current complaints and regulation system for different disability services is confusing, disconnected between different departments, and hard to navigate. The existing systems don't talk to each other, and people fall through the cracks. This also means that the different systems don't learn from each other. Disabled people need one clear, accessible place to go when things go wrong, instead of being pushed between different regulators. The Victorian Government should establish a specialist, disability-led complaints and regulation body that merges the Victorian Disability Workers Commission and the Disability Services Commission.

What you can do
Write polite and respectful letters or e-mails to:

The Hon Ben Carroll
Premier
Office of the Premier
1 Treasury Place
Melbourne, Victoria, 3002

Salutation: Dear Premier

E-mail: ben.carroll@parliament.vic.gov.au

Ms Jess Wilson
Leader of the Opposition
12 Parkhill Rd
Kew VIC 3101

Salutation: Dear Ms Wilson

E-mail: jess.wilson.mp@parliament.vic.gov.au

Mr Iwan Walters
Parliamentary Secretary for Disability
Suite C308, Level 3
1510 Pascoe Vale Road
Coolaroo, Victoria, 3048

Salutation: Dear Mr Walters

E-mail: iwan.walters@parliament.vic.gov.au

Ms Jade Benham
Shadow Minister for Disability, Ageing, Carers and Volunteers
35A Deakin Avenue
Mildura VIC 3500

Salutation: Dear Ms Benham

E-mail: jade.benham@parliament.vic.gov.au

Points to make in your letter or e-mail:

- Express concern that the Victorian Government has failed to act on the vast majority of relevant recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.
- Ask if they make up the next Victorian Government, are they willing to commit to:
    - Make government engagement with people with disability fair, accessible, and meaningful, adopting the Disability Standards for Engagement;
    - Work with Disability People's Organisations to promptly implement the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability that are relevant to Victoria;
    - Reform guardianship laws so that disabled people keep control over their own lives;
    - Create a plan to move away from group homes and institutions;
    - Create a specialist disability complaints and regulation body so that disabled people have a single regulator to make complaints to; and,
    - Implement the next Victorian State Disability Plan in genuine partnership with people with disability and Disabled People's Organisations, ensuring clear actions, measurable outcomes, regular public reporting, and greater accountability for achieving meaningful outcomes.

Your letters will be more powerful if you include information about any experiences you have had (although make sure you respect the privacy of any disabled person if you write about anyone else). Also, feel free to add more detail to the requests from the information above.

Please send any responses you get to jim@victas.uca.org.au