



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY
Assembly Standing Committee

11-13 March 2022

DOCUMENT 2-CA4

Title	Disability Royal Commission National Task Group Report
Type of Paper (Information/Decision)	For decision
Assembly or ASC Minute	Not applicable
Consultation	As indicated in papers
Purpose	To update the ASC of the work of the Disability Royal Commission National Task Group.
Rationale & Findings Summary	
Attachments	
Proposal/s	That the Assembly Standing Committee: 1. Receive the Disability Royal Commission National Task Group Report
Submitted by	Colleen Geyer Assembly General Secretary colleeng@nat.uca.org.au ; 0411 333 167

Communique – No. 1, 28 February 2022

National Task Group – Disability Royal Commission

On 8 February 2022, the National Task Group (NTG) for the Disability Royal Commission met via video conference. The Communique contains:

- information about matters and decisions from the meeting that are relevant to the Synod Task Groups/Synods and their work
- a general update on the work of the NTG
- important information about the work of the Disability Royal Commission and related updates.

The Communique can be circulated to Synod Task Group members and Synod staff but should not be circulated further.

If you have any questions about the Communique or would like to discuss it further, please contact Beth Irvin, Executive Officer, National Task Group on 02 6181 1006 or bethi@nat.unitingcare.org.au.

National Task Group – Membership

The NTG welcomed the following new members:

- Anna Wilson as the ASC representative
- Michael Chester as the new WA Synod representative
- Judy Hansen as the new Northern Synod representative
- Faisal Saeed as the acting Qld Synod representative
- Lisa Kinsey-Smith as the new UnitingCare network representative.

Trauma-informed eLearning modules

The Group was advised that:

- the first draft of the trauma-informed eLearning modules will be provided on Monday, 28 February
- UnitingCare Australia will have two rounds of review/revision where the developers can make changes.

Rev Kylie Crabbe – Presentation

Kylie provided an interesting and thought-provoking presentation on the intersectionality of disability and theology using three bible studies presented at the 2021 meeting of VicTas Synod. Kylie talked about:

- how bible texts involving people with disability have been interpreted by Christianity over the millennia

- the miracle tradition (for example changed or healed by Jesus) and the way disability is used in the texts
- the medical, social and other models through which disability is viewed.

Kylie invited people to think about the use of the texts involving disability/impairment and how they might be interpreted within a more modern context and in a range of settings. For example, congregations, bible study groups, community services, residential aged care facilities etc.

The NTG learned that the studies referred to above were being further developed and were expected to be completed prior to Easter. There are three 20-minute videos as part of the studies along with accompanying and facilitator notes to guide the discussion.

The Group agreed:

- that it was important that the intersectionality of disability and theology become embedded within the Church and all its activities
- to include the intersectionality of disability and theology as a standing agenda item at future meetings.

Update on the Work of the Disability Royal Commission

The NTG was updated on the following matters which had been undertaken by the Disability Royal Commission since its last meeting:

- three research reports (11th, 12th and 13th) were published
- four public hearings (17, 18, 19 and 20) were held
- its report following public hearing 7 – Barriers experienced by students with disability in accessing and obtaining a safe, quality and inclusive school education and consequent life course impacts was released on 17 November
- the overview of responses to the experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability issues paper was released on 30 November.

The Group was informed that on 24 January the Royal Commission advised that:

- anyone who wants to have a private session to register before 30 June 2022
- any submissions need to be sent and received by the Royal Commission by 31 December 2022.

The NTG noted that the landscape around the Royal Commission had changed considerably, especially in relation to the:

- release of Australia's Disability Strategy on 3 December, which was International Day of People with Disability
- announcement of Dylan Alcott on 25 January as the 2022 Australian of the Year.

The Group noted that the strategy:

- was developed in consultation with community members and stakeholders across the disability sector over the last two years, including a range of disability representative organisations
- has been endorsed by:
 - the Australian Government, state and territory governments and the Australian Local Government Association
 - a wide range of disability representative organisations including those representing First Peoples, CALD, women, children and young people and various types of disability
- is supported by:
 - five targeted action plans and an outcomes framework to help drive change for people with disability over the next decade
 - a \$250 million investment to break down barriers for the 4.4 million Australians with disability.

People with Disability Advisory Group

Due to the small number of applications (three) for the People with Disability Advisory Group the NTG agreed to:

- take no further action in relation to establishing the proposed People with Disability Advisory Group
- consider including the three applicants as well as people with disability from the NTG in any activities moving forward in relation to the Disability Royal Commission so that lived experience can inform those activities (co-design and co-production).

Disability Royal Commission – Proposed way forward

The NTG agreed that the Church and its agencies should address the following three issues emerging from the Disability Royal Commission sooner rather than later:

- governance and decision-making, for example the composition of governance bodies including councils, boards and committees, input from people with disability, oversight of service delivery, people with disability in senior and decision-making roles and employers of people with disability (including, potentially, targets)
- access to and adequate complaints resolution processes and institutional safety, especially in relation to access for people who are non-verbal, deaf, have sight impairment, have low literacy or a cognitive disability
- awareness and use of supported decision-making and choice and control.

The NTG also agreed that:

- overarching principles be developed to support the three top issues outlined above
- workforce issues be considered while developing the overarching principles

- that a small working group of people from the Disability Network, Synods and people with lived experience be formed to develop the overarching principles for the issues outlined above
- that a small team (consisting of Bruce, Andy, Lisa and Jade with Beth providing secretariat support) be established to consider the membership of the working group developing the overarching principles.

Reports from each Synod and the Disability Network

Written reports from three Synods (VicTas, Northern and WA) and the Disability Network were circulated with the meeting papers. These reports were taken as read.

Government's policy work that is relevant to the Disability Royal Commission

The group noted that there was no update on the alignment of the regulations for the aged care, disability and veterans' sectors.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the NTG is Tuesday, 19 April 2022.