Talking Disability Royal Commission Podcast

Episode 3 Transcript

Disability Royal Commission Q & A

**Talia Roshan:** Hello and welcome to Talking Disability Royal Commission, a podcast that explains the Royal Commission into violence, abuse neglect and exploitation of people with disability. I'm Talia Roshan in today's episode, the Disability Royal Commission answers your questions. We are fortunate to have Tamara from the Disability Royal Commission join us again today. Hello and welcome.

**Tamara:** Hey, how you going?

**Talia Roshan:** Yeah, well and yourself.

**Tamara:** Very well. Thank you. Thanks for having me back.

**Talia Roshan:** Thank you so much for coming back. So today's episode is all about the Disability Royal Commission answering your questions. So let's get straight into it. One of the most common questions I get asked is does my experience have to be recent?

**Tamara:** no, not at all. Your experience does not have to be recent. If you have a story you would like to share with the Commission of the impact of violence, neglect, abuse, or exploitation against people with a disability, or it might be your own personal experience, we would really like to hear from you no matter what the timeline of events are.

**Talia Roshan:** so it could have been something that happened last week, or it could have been something that happened 10 years ago. Absolutely. Yes. So how long does my submission have to be?

**Tamara:** This is up to you. It can be as short or as long as you like submissions can be received in many forms in a way that's comfortable for you.

For example, we've had written submissions or we've actually had some music submissions and where experiences may have been hard for some people to put into words. We've also had art submitted to tell their story as well, which is powerful.

**Talia Roshan:** Wow. So that's really great. There's so many different ways that people can communicate with the Commission.

**Tamara:** absolutely .

**Talia Roshan:** fantastic. Another question I get all the time is can I share my experience anonymously? And if I do, will the Commission give my submission less weight?

**Tamara:** really good question. The Commission will not give your submissions any less weight because you made a choice to remain anonymous. Amendments to the law about Royal Commissions made in August last year mean that you can share your experience of violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation with the Royal Commission and any information you provide in confidence to the Royal Commission will be protected from disclosure for a period of 99 years. After the Royal Commission ends, this means that your information can not be published or disclosed to anyone outside the Royal Commission, except in very, very limited circumstances, which sometimes includes after the Royal Commission ends.

**Talia Roshan:** Okay, great. So there's really that added layer of confidentiality. So people can feel comfortable to share their experience anonymously if they wish, and the Commissioners will still give the same weight to a submission. Is shared anonymously as someone who will share their details as well.

**Tamara:** Yes, that's correct.

**Talia Roshan:** Fantastic. And I know you mentioned something about publishing stories. So can you maybe just give us a little bit more information about whether the Disability Royal Commission will publish a story?

**Tamara:** Absolutely. To ensure you're generally working from that trauma informed approach, choice and control over the publication of any personal experiences shared in a submission nature, need remain with the person sharing those experiences.

So as part of a revised submissions process, uh, each individual is provided with the information about how their submission could be used, before they’re asked to give their consent to use it. So the Royal Commission will not publish information from a submission in any public document, without the informed consent of a person or organization who are making the submission, and the updated submission form includes a prompt for organizations and individuals to tell us if and how they want the information used.

**Talia Roshan:** And what if I'm interested in being considered as a witness for a hearing, what do I do?

**Tamara:** Many different types of people asked to give evidence at a public hearing.

Witnesses are selected by our counsel assisting and the solicitor assisting the Royal Commission. So witnesses are selected based on a number of considerations, a key one being the relevance of the evidence to the issues being explored at a particular. The Royal Commission is unable to hear from every person who would like to participate in a public hearing.

While public hearings serve an important role in highlighting and exploring specific issues into which the Royal Commission is inquiring, they are not the only way to contribute obviously to the Royal Commission's work submissions as we just talked about also an essential source of information for us here at the Royal Commission.

**Talia Roshan:** So there are lots of different ways that people can engage with the Commission, and there's also different ways that that can be communicated, and one of those is the public hearing, but if people don't speak at a public hearing, they can also do a submission, and that's given the same amount of weight as well as evidence that's heard at a public hearing.

**Tamara:** Yeah.

**Talia Roshan:** Great. And what happens to a submission once it is given to the Disability Royal Commission?

**Tamara:** So once the Royal Commission has received your written audio or video account, we will contact you to confirm that we received it and you will be sent a letter of acknowledgement. Your submission then goes forward, to inform the work of the Royal Commission. Very important.

**Talia Roshan:** So another question I get, through a lot of the interactions that I have, is what will the Disability Royal Commission do to change or improve my situation?

**Tamara:** Thanks Talia. This question has been raised quite a few times, and it is really an important one for us to clarify for you. So, the Royal Commission cannot decide or resolve individual cases or award any compensation.

So sharing a story might not have an immediate impact on your personal circumstances. However, sharing your story, as mentioned before, will help us to understand the extent of a problem, learn more about the context in which violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation is more likely to occur. It helps us also understand the impacts on people with disabilities, their families, their support people in that, our community.

And it also helps us gather information relevant to our investigations and research programs.

**Talia Roshan:** And, and all of that will go towards informing the Royal Commission and helping them with their final report and making change in the future.

**Tamara:** Yes.

**Talia Roshan:** Fantastic. Tamara. Thank you so much for joining us again today.

We really appreciate it.

**Tamara:** Thanks for having me, Talia.

**Talia Roshan:** In our next episode, we will be asking legal questions and hearing from Oliver Moore a solicitor from Your Story Disability legal support. Hey, did you know that you can ask a question and we'll answer it on the podcast. Go to the podcast page to record your question, and there are no silly questions, remember? www.family, hyphen advocacy.com/podcast. You'll also find a transcript, any resources that I've spoken about, and you can listen to other episodes there.

This was recorded and produced on the lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. Thank you for listening to Talking Disability Royal Commission, a production of Family Advocacy.