Talking Disability Royal Commission Podcast

Episode 5 Transcript

Why Share with the Disability Royal Commission?

**Talia:**  Hello, and welcome to talking Disability Royal Commission, a podcast that makes sense of the Royal Commission into violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of people with disability.

I'm Talia Roshan. In this episode, you'll hear who the disability Royal Commission want to hear from and what they are interested in hearing. And if you're a family member of a person with disability, there's tips on how to get your voice heard by the Commission.

I am joined today by Dinesh Palipana from the Disability Royal Commission. Dinesh is a Queensland doctor and lawyer, and he is also the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Senior Advisor to the Disability Royal Commission. Dinesh, thank you so much for joining us.

**Dinesh:** Thanks for having me.

**Talia:** So Dinesh, you're going to tell us some more about who the Disability Royal Commission want to hear from and what they are looking to hear about. So I guess my first question that I'll start with is some people listen to the stories that people share at public hearings and think *my experience of violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation is not as bad as that. I don't think I should share my lived experience*. What would you say to those people?

**Dinesh:** Our terms of reference are really broad, to ensure that we support and are inclusive of all people's experiences of what disability is to them. The Royal Commission is committed to hearing experiences across the breadth of our terms of reference, and really we need to hear everyone's story.

And there's no comparing stories and everyone's experience is unique and important. And it's all relative as well. So I really encourage anyone who is thinking about talking to us to share their story because we, we really need to hear from a breadth of people. And even though you might not think that your story is not as bad as someone else's, you might not think that your story is bad as something else.It's, it's still valuable sharing it.

And in fact, I can speak to some of my own experiences in the past where I've thought, you know what? That's actually not that bad, what happened to me, but then when I've debriefed about it with someone else or when I've shared with someone else, I realized, wow, that was actually quite significant.

So we need to hear from everyone and we want to hear from everyone and we support everyone to share their story.

In society today, we're moving towards being people centred. Right? And I think that's one of the most important things. I see people in my line of work every day in my other job as a doctor and often I'll see people going through various experiences and some of them will say, oh, you know what? Then, then I look at what you've gone through having a spinal cord injury and whatever else. And it just doesn't feel as significant or doesn't feel as bad. But I disagree because we all go through different experiences and for each and every one of us, it's a different level of significance and severity.

So it's, it is all relative and it's different for each and every person.

**Talia:** Yeah, thank you so much for that Dinesh and another question that I just wanted to ask as well, is what does the term “disability” mean?

**Dinesh:** In our terms of reference, people with disability means people with any kind of impairment, whether it's existing at birth or acquired through illness, accident or the aging process, including cognitive impairment and physical sensory, intellectual, and psychosocial disability, the word disability is really broad and people with the lived experience will have preferences, whether to use that word, not use that word, use a different word to disability. And in fact, there are so many different opinions and preferences around the world and across our society about the word “disability”, but really it it's a different meaning to each and every one person. And it's very unique and individual, and I think it's important to remember that. So for different people, it means different things. And I think we, we just, we, we all need to respect that.

**Talia:** And just on that point of what disability means does someone need to have a certain disability to make a submission to the Disability Royal Commission ?

**Dinesh:** The Commission accepts all submissions received from the community. If a person feels they have a story to tell, we don't question their lived experience. We also receive submissions and private session requests from parents, friends, carers, and whistleblowers who don't have a disability, but wish to share experiences that relate to a person with disability.

**Talia:** So anyone can share an experience that they have, either you can be a person with disability sharing your experience, or you can be a person without a disability, but sharing the experience of someone with a disability.

**Dinesh:** Absolutely. And I think it's actually important to hear again, from a wide cross section of people. In my life I have caregivers, I have family members. I have people who are really close to me. And through conversations with them over the years, I've actually discovered that they have some different perspectives and they've even noticed somethings that I don't notice about the disability experience. That's really important to tease out. So it's, it's incredibly valuable to get those perspectives, to make sure that the we improve the experience for people with disability and the people around them.

**Talia:** That's really fantastic. My next question was going to be how can family members of people with disability ensure that their voices are heard. And I think you've really encapsulated that w with that response, and I think that's fantastic.

But was there anything else that you might've wanted to add to that question?

**Dinesh:** Yeah, family members of people with disability are really a crucial piece of the puzzle. Even when we talk about unpaid carers of which there are so many in Australian society and they add billions of dollars to our economy and they do such an important piece of work. They play a critical role. So it's important for us to hear from them.

**Talia:** Yeah, really, really important. And we also heard from Tamara in episode one about the definitions of violence, abuse, neglect, and ex exploitation. Are these, the only things the Commission wanting to hear about? What if someone has a story about something that has worked really well?

Is the Commission interested in hearing positive stories too?

**Dinesh:** Absolutely. Although it's very important for us to understand what's not working well. We do need to understand what is currently working well. We have heard a lot of what is not working, but would also like to hear of best practice or frameworks that you might've seen implemented that work well for you and others in the community.

So, yes, definitely. We want to hear about things that are working well,

**Talia:** Look, Dinesh thank you so much for joining us. I really appreciate it.

**Dinesh:** Thanks for having me.

**Talia:** In our next episode, we'll be talking to Dinesh again about why it is so important to engage with the Disability Royal Commission. 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. www.family-advocacy.com/podcast. You'll also find a transcript, any resources that I've spoken about and you can listen to other episodes there as well. 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.