Talking Disability Royal Commission Podcast

Episode 2 Transcript

What is an Advocate and how can
Family Advocacy help?

**Troy:** Hello and welcome to the Talking Disability Royal Commission, a show that helps you make sense of the Royal Commission into violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of people with disability. I'm Troy Hester. The last episode was all about submissions, the different formats and we heard from Joe, Caroline and Natalie, and they've all made submissions. So now you've heard how to make a submission, maybe you're stuck on actually doing it, or you've been putting it off. This episode will help. In this episode, you'll meet three advocates for the Royal Commission, myself, Talia and Carly. If you're a first nations person with disability, Carly's advice will be especially useful.

But first up one person that can help you is me. When I'm not doing this podcast, my official job title is advocacy engagement officer and I work at Family Advocacy. This means I give free help to anyone who needs a hand to make a submission and share their experience with the Disability Royal Commission.

So what do I do? I answer your questions. I guide you through the process, listen to what you want to share with the commission and support you to make a submission in the format that works best for you. I can also tell you about other free supports available such as free legal advice and counselling. My colleague Talia also does all this stuff because she's an advocacy engagement officer at Family Advocacy too.

And before I get talking to Talia If you want to contact Talia or I call or email us through the Family Advocacy website, www.family-advocacy.com.

Hi Talia

**Talia:** Hi Troy

**Troy:** So can I ask why are advocates like us needed?

**Talia:** Yeah, that's a really good question. Advocates like us can explain more around what the Commission is, answer any questions you may have talk you through the different ways. You can share your story and support and encourage you through every step of the way.

It's a really big step to share a personal experience with the Royal Commission. And sometimes it's a really big and traumatic experience. So having an advocate to help you unpack what you really want to talk about can be very helpful. Advocates can also help build your confidence to share your experience.

**Troy:** So does everyone wanting to talk to the Disability Royal Commission need an advocate?

**Talia:** Yeah, not everyone needs an advocate to share their experience with the Royal Commission. Some people will know exactly what they want to say to the Commission and how they want to say it for others. They may not know much about the Royal commission, where to start, what to share or how to share it. And that's where we come in.

**Troy:** So does an advocate do your submission for you?

**Talia:** I hear this a lot and it's really important that we do not do the submission for you. We can be involved to support you with your submission, but it is so important that the commission hear your experience, it's your story, your voice of experience and something that needs to be your voice, not ours.

**Troy:** Now Family Advocacy is only one organization offering advocacy support in New South Wales. There are many advocacy organizations around Australia that offer support to people wanting to engage with the Disability Royal Commission. If you want to find an advocate in your area, check out DANA D-A-N-A. DANA is the disability advocacy network Australia, and you can go to their website, [www.dana.org.au](http://www.dana.org.au) to find a local advocate.

Now, first peoples disability network is the peak national organization of, and for Australia's first nations people with disability. And today we are joined by Carly Wallace. Hi Carly.

**Carly:** Hi, thanks for having me

**Troy:** Carly Can I ask you you're an advocate with the first nations disability network? What is it that you do?

**Carly:** Yeah, I think as an advocate for first peoples disability network, I'm doing essentially the same job as you and Talia, I speak to specifically Aboriginal and Torres strait islander People with disabilities and their families and carers I'm also a coordinator of some advocates we have in some places around Australia now including Alice Springs Cairns the Torres Strait south Australia, Newcastle, and also Western Australia and the Kimberly region.

So I kind of advocate those guys to be out on the ground and I'm working with people to tell them about the Royal Commission and also how they can share their story in a safe way as well. So the only difference I guess, that I have with yourselves is I don't necessarily always do the submissions.

I set our mob up with people like yourselves from culturally. competent advocacy services that we've worked with over the years and trained to work with our people safely. So yeah, I actually link them in and I guess I'm a little bit of a conduit as people would say to, to people like yourselves and to our first nations community.

**Troy:** Thanks. So how do you help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with disability to communicate with a disability Royal Commission in a culturally appropriate way?

**Carly:** Yes, it's really important to be able to break down what the Commission is. When you are speaking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. You know, we have different languages, different dialects across Australia and just also, you know, being accessible and making it really simple because it can be very wordy, tt can be a lot of paperwork and essentially just explaining that to our mob in different areas. You know, it's not going to be the same, explaining the Commission to someone from the Torres straits as to someone on the mainland, you know, different differences in cultural ways in language and lots of different things.

So really just making sure that we're trying our best to connect with communities and people from those areas to be able to get the word out, explain it how people need to know about it for them and what works for their community and their stories, and really just putting forward, you know, their needs, so again, it's like yourselves, how, how that person with the disability wants to tell their story in their way, and then go from there and see how we can best support them.

**Troy:** And are there particular supports that happen so somebody can share in their own language?

**Carly:** Yeah. So you know, we, we always make sure we say that because the same as the Disability Royal Commission who say, you know, you can tell your story in whatever way you want in whatever language you would like. And you know, the commissioners are there to support that as first peoples disability network, we really try our best to do that as well.

So if we do have someone say from the deaf community who may want an someone for a first nations interpreter, we will help to try and find that and link them in with that person. Someone maybe who speaks Creole from the Torres Strait, as an example, we will make sure we have people in the room that can speak that Creole can help translate for ourselves as advocates who may not know that language. But also so that person's comfortable in speaking that their first language and dialect and still have their story heard and interpreted for commissioners and others to hear. So depending on the person's circumstance and where they're from you know, we really try our best to help them and support them.

**Troy:** That’s great. So if I'm a first nations person listening, what's the best way to connect with an advocate from first peoples disability network?

**Carly:** Yeah, I guess you can you know, jumping out website and have a look. We've got lots of resources and lots of information about the Disability Royal Commission. We have a pretty simple animation on there as well. That explains it with using the artwork that is done by Uncle Paul Calcott, who is the senior artist that did the artwork first and foremost, but also is an advocate and also our resource manager. So yeah, we've got a pretty awesome animation that explains the journey of respectful listening of the Disability Royal Commission, so I just encourage people to go on our website, which is www.FPDN.org.au or you can also just email, which is just inquiries at FPDN dot org dot au, and just ask to be linked in with an advocate for the Disability Royal Commission. And if you want to pick up the phone and that's easier for you as well, then you can always call us on oh two nine two six seven four one nine five. So we'd love to hear from you.

**Troy:** Thanks Carly

**Carly:** Thanks troy

**Troy:** So you've heard from three different advocates today, and we're always keen to hear from you. Our next episode is a question and answer with a Disability Royal Commission, where they will answer your questions. So we'd love to hear a question from you. To record a question, go to the podcast page at family advocacy's website, [www.family-advocacy.com/podcast](http://www.family-advocacy.com/podcast). Here, you'll find a transcript, any resources I've talked about and you can listen to our 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.