



The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

Subject: **call for a Royal Commission into abuse of people with disability**

A recent report (see [Autistic teen found gagged and tied up in toilet block at Croydon Special Developmental School](#)) shows abuse of autistic Australians is an ongoing disgrace. Government representatives say “the police had been called and it was now their matter”. Substantial experience shows that the outcome is predictable ... and unacceptable.

Other recent media reports include:

- [Students grabbed, wrestled to the floor and strapped to chairs three or more times a day](#)
- [Autistic boy being held in adult mental health ward in Launceston](#)

It is very clear that existing practices, being Australia’s legal system and various ineffective Disability Discrimination Commissions and Ombudsmen, absolve perpetrators of abusing and assaulting people with disability, and just penalise and further abuse victims.

Autistic Australians endure ongoing abuse, assaults, neglect and unacceptable restraint ... and Governments in Australia remain dismissive, ineffective and unresponsive. Their protection processes for people with disability persecute victims and whistle-blowers.

The failure and refusal of Governments to address abuse, assault, neglect and unacceptable restraint of people with disability is profoundly disappointing. Inappropriate treatment (current practice) typically exacerbates the condition and promotes challenging behaviours; which in turn increases the economic and societal costs of supporting autistic individuals in Australia.

In 2015, the first of 30 recommendations in [the report of the Community Affairs References Committee on Violence, abuse and neglect against people with disability in institutional and residential settings, including the gender and age related dimensions, and the particular situation of Aboriginal and](#)

Torres Strait Islander people with disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability said ...

The committee recommends that a Royal Commission into violence, abuse and neglect of people with disability be called, with terms of reference to be determined in consultation with people with disability, their families and supporters, and disability organisations.

But the Government says “no”. The Hon Christian Porter MP, Minister for Social Services, [announced a NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission](#) to start in 2018. His approach continues existing practice, hoping baselessly that yet another commission, his new [National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\) Quality and Safeguards Commission](#), will produce a different outcome including in areas where his new Commission will have no jurisdiction. Apparently, the Minister does not understand that Australians with disability, especially those with “unwanted behaviour”, do not have rights to education or other services (see [Purvis vs NSW](#)) so another commission cannot “uphold the rights of people with disability” since under Australian law these people have no right to essential services.

Media reports show that abuse of vulnerable people with disability, especially autistic people, continues and the disability sector still wants a Royal Commission.

- [Civil Society Backs Calls for Royal Commission into Disability Violence](#)
- [Disability Groups Renew Call for Abuse Royal Commission](#)
- [Disability groups welcome ALP commitment to Royal Commission into violence against people with disability](#)
- [AFDO Joins Calls for Royal Commission into Abuse of People with Disability](#)
- [Action on Abuse of People with Disability](#)
- [Blind academic calls for Royal Commission into abuse of people with disabilities](#)

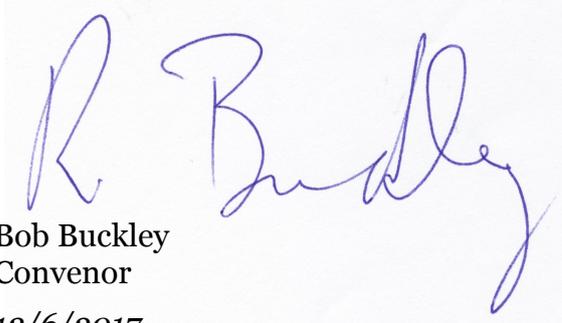
Issues of abuse, assault, neglect and restraint of people with disability impact on [education](#), [health](#) and [employment](#) ... these issues extend beyond the responsibilities of the Minister for Social Services and his Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services.

People see the Minister’s position against holding this Royal Commission as a clear demonstration of this Liberal and National Government’s disappointing approach and attitude to people with disability.

Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia urges the Government to accept the Community Affairs References Committee’s recommendation and the clear will of the disability sector, as people with disability and those living with disability need the federal Government to tackle issues of abuse, assaults, neglect and unacceptable restraint instead of perpetuating more of the same.

Autism Aspergers Advocacy Australia calls on the federal Government to conduct a Royal Commission into violence, abuse and neglect of people with disability.

Yours sincerely



Bob Buckley
Convenor

13/6/2017

Cc: The Hon Christian Porter MP, Minister for Social Services
The Hon Jane Prentice MP, Assistant Minister for Social Services and Disability Services
Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Education and Training
Hon Greg Hunt MP, Minister for Health
Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister for Employment