



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA
Family and Community Development Committee

MEDIA RELEASE

Action needed to stop abuse in disability sector

Abuse of people with disabilities has been widespread in Victoria and a number of immediate measures are needed to prevent that abuse, a Victorian parliamentary committee has found.

After an extensive inquiry, the Family and Community Development Committee has made 49 recommendations to strengthen the disability services system in Victoria prior to the transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

“For too long, people with disability in Victoria have endured violence in all its forms,” said Committee Chair Maree Edwards, who presented the report to the Victorian Parliament today.

“Throughout this inquiry the voices of people with disability, their families, carers, advocates and disability sector workers have reinforced over and over again that the disability sector in Victoria is marked by an intrinsic lack of effective safeguarding and oversight. Fundamental change in the sector is needed to address these ingrained issues of violence, abuse and neglect,” Ms Edwards said.

Key recommendations include:

- Introduction of a zero tolerance framework for abuse in the disability sector
- A mandatory scheme for reporting abuse in Victoria
- Enhanced powers for the Disability Services Commissioner
- Renewing the Commissioner’s role as the independent oversight body for disability services in Victoria
- Introduction of a Working with Vulnerable People Check for all prospective employees in the disability sector
- Continued funding of dedicated advocacy services to support people with disability and their families.

In its report, the Committee has recognised that women with disability are disproportionately affected by abuse. It has made recommendations to address this, including expansion of services to support women with disability.

“This report demonstrates a compelling need for change,” Ms Edwards said.

“People with disability who have suffered violence, abuse and neglect must be accorded the human rights and access to justice they have been denied for too long.”

The report is available from the Committee’s [website](#).

Media Queries

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