



[The 561-page interim report](#) summarises the first 15 months of work, finding that people with disabilities experience maltreatment across all aspects of life, from work and education to healthcare, to the justice system, and in homes and communities.

But the commissioners say it is “too soon” for the report to outline any recommendations, pointing in part to the impact of the pandemic on the inquiry’s work.

“The terms of reference are extraordinarily broad, much broader than any royal commission appointed in this country since well before the turn of the 21st century,” Sackville said. “That means the commission is not a sprint, it’s a marathon.”



Under the new timetable requested by the commissioner, the final report would be due by 29 September 2023.

**'I felt less alone':  
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with disabilities are  
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Next month the commission will also release a further report with findings and recommendations on the federal government’s response to the pandemic.

The interim report released on Friday [includes accounts of children being subjected](#) to “cruel bullying and humiliating restraints in education settings”, as well as “serious neglect and misdiagnoses of people with cognitive disability within the healthcare system”.

[In these health settings](#), the report said “symptoms of disease or injury are wrongly attributed to a person’s disability”, an issue known as “diagnostic overshadowing”.

The commission also heard cases of physical and sexual abuse in supported accommodation, perpetrated by staff.

[First Nations people with disabilities](#) faced double discrimination and dealt with a lack of culturally appropriate services and supports.

The report highlighted a lack of nationally consistent data collected by governments on the neglect or exploitation of people with disability.

Similarly the [federal government was criticised during Covid-19 specific hearings](#) earlier in the year for its failure to collect data on the number of people with disabilities who had been infected or died.

While data on the 365,000 NDIS participants was available, there are 4.4 million people with disability in Australia.

The interim report said governments and organisations “should not wait” for the commission’s final report to begin addressing data gaps.

Although consistent data was scant, the inquiry commissioned researchers to analyse the statistics that were available.

They found adults with disability are twice as likely to experience violence in any 12-month period than those without disability.

The data, from 2016, suggested almost 2.4 million people with disability aged 18 to 64 had experienced violence in their lifetime.

The commission will hold its next set of public hearings on 23 November in Brisbane in a session examining the experiences of First Nations people with disability and the impact of child protection systems.

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