

# Communique

## National Task Group – Disability Royal Commission

On 5 February 2020, the National Task Group (NTG) for the Disability Royal Commission met face to face in Sydney. This Communique contains information about matters and decisions from the face to face meeting that are relevant to the Synod Task Groups/Synods and their work. This Communique can be circulated to Synod Task Group members and Synod staff but should not be circulated further.

If you have any questions about this Communique or would like to discuss it further, please contact Tenille Fricker, Executive Officer, National Task Group on 02 6181 1006 or [tenillef@nat.unitingcare.org.au](mailto:tenillef@nat.unitingcare.org.au).

### Reports from each Synod

Synod representatives on the NTG were asked to provide an update on the work of their Synod Task Group/Synod, any work underway and any correspondence they had received from the Disability Royal Commission. It was agreed that:

- Synod representatives send through the membership of Synod Task Groups to Tenille
- Synod representatives send through the minutes of Synod Task Group meetings to Tenille, if Synod Task Groups agree
- Synod representatives provide a one-page update on the work of the Synod on the Disability Royal Commission prior to each meeting for inclusion in the meeting papers

### Communications Strategy

Prior to the meeting a draft Communications Strategy was prepared for discussion and circulated to NTG members. The Communications Strategy was drafted to reflect the NTG's preference for the Church and its service organisations to speak with one voice on matters relating to the Disability Royal Commission. This approach will enable a consistent, trauma-informed response to people with disability who have experienced violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in the Church and agencies as well as provide certainty to the Commission itself.

At the meeting, members of the NTG provided feedback on the draft and agreed that the Communications Strategy should be updated to incorporate this feedback following the meeting. Once this has been completed, the strategy will be sent to NTG members for sign off.

The Communications Strategy, once finalised, will provide an overview of how communications relating to the Disability Royal Commission are to be handled. It will provide guidance on the process to follow if a media request is received and who should respond to the request.

### **Submissions**

At the meeting, the NTG discussed topics it may like to make a submission on and the need for any submissions to amplify the voices of people with disabilities, including case studies. The NTG agreed Synod representatives are to let Tenille know if they become aware that the Synod or its agencies are considering making a submission to the Disability Royal Commission.

### **Protocol on engaging with the Disability Royal Commission**

A Protocol on engaging with the Disability Royal Commission (Protocol) was drafted and circulated to NTG members. The purpose of the Protocol is to provide a single contact for the Commission and to outline the process to be taken when others within the life of the Church receive a communication from the Commission. The Protocol has been finalised and is enclosed with the Communique.

The Protocol is to be circulated to Synod staff. It is to be sent to the Synod's community service organisations, congregations and missions. It is to be sent to schools operated by or on behalf of the Church under Regulation 3.7.4.7(b)(i). It is recommended that the Protocol be sent to associated schools as per Regulation 3.7.4.7(b)(iii) indicating that it would be the Synod's preference that the school follow the Protocol.

Please send Tenille an email once the Protocol has been circulated and sent as set out above.

### **Mapping of disability services and activities across the Uniting Church**

The NTG discussed the need to map the disability services and activities across the Church. It agreed:

- To prepare a survey for Synods and its agencies

- That the same survey should be used by the NTG and the Synods
- That responses to the survey should be provided by the end of June at the latest.

The NTG discussed the need for the survey to have clear parameters, very specific questions and to clearly articulate its purpose to those receiving it.

If you would like to suggest questions for the survey, please email Tenille.

### **Meeting dates for 2020**

The NTG agreed on future meeting dates for 2020. They are:

- 29 April, via teleconference
- 16 June, face to face, Adelaide
- 28 August, via teleconference
- 10 November, face to face, Sydney