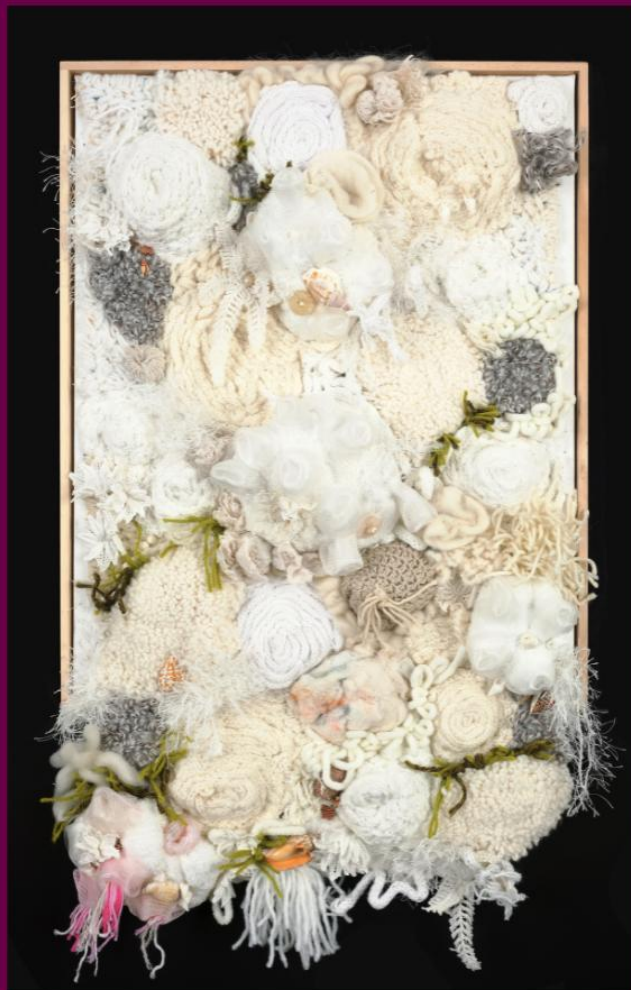


Analysis of Volume 7 (b) of the Implementation of the DRC



Artwork by artist with disability,
Felicity Clark

About the Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network

The Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network (**QIDAN**) is a group of organisations providing individual advocacy services to Queenslanders living with disability. These organisations are funded under the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program (**QDAP**). The member organisations include Aged and Disability Advocacy; AMPARO Advocacy Inc; Capricorn Citizen Advocacy; Mackay Advocacy Inc; People with Disability Australia; Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion (**QAI**); Rights in Action; Yarn2Action run by Aged and Disability Advocacy; Speaking Up For You; and TASC.

QIDAN has three aims:

- Systemic advocacy: coordinated action to address systemic issues experienced by people with disability,
- Member support: a collaborative space for the exchange of information, resources and issues affecting disability advocacy organisations, and
- Sector advocacy: to promote the importance and value of independent disability advocacy on a local, state, and national basis.

The members of QIDAN offer various independent disability advocacy services across Queensland, including general disability advocacy, specialised individual advocacy (including National Disability Insurance Scheme appeals), citizen advocacy and systemic advocacy. QAI coordinates the Disability Advocacy Pathways Hotline ('Pathways') to provide information and referrals to people with disability, their families and supporters.

About the cover artwork

The cover artwork was created by Felicity Clark – a reflection on her physical and mental journey since her accident.

Felicity says:

"This piece is representative of the Barrier Reef's slow destabilisation and destruction due to outside influences but also reflects my physical and mental health journey since my accident. Amongst the decay and despair there is a renewal of hope with slow regrowth/rebirth toward a more positive future".

Technique:

Multiple textile techniques including hand stitching, soft sculpture, crochet and weaving.

Materials:

95% recycled materials including repurposed yarns and fibres, laces, second-hand clothing, floristry flower covers, shells, antique buttons and recycled jewellery, all hand stitched onto canvas and framed.

Background

In response to the lack of transparent and meaningful updates on the implementation of the Disability Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (**DRC**), QIDAN initiated an independent, self-led analysis of the progress of each DRC recommendation. What started as a review of publicly available information quickly became something much larger, and our findings from the analysis changed the way we think about the governments' commitment to Queenslanders with disability. We decided to turn our analysis into the following report, because we believe that our findings belong to the public. QIDAN have two main intentions for this report:

1. We want it to be a tool everyone can use to independently track the implementation of the DRC recommendations, and to keep up to date with what governments have said and/or done in relation to the recommendations.
2. We want to keep governments accountable.

Since the DRC was first established in 2019, it has had a significant impact on Australia's disability community. The consultation and evidence gathering process involved nearly 10,000 people with disability, their families and their carers, who shared stories of maltreatment, discrimination, and oppression. The incredible strength of those who contributed to the DRC helped to inform 222 recommendations issued by the DRC in its final report in September 2023. All recommendations were made with the intent of reducing and eliminating the risk of maltreatment, discrimination and exclusion experienced by people with disability, and to reach the realisation of equitable rights and genuine inclusion.

Despite the DRC final report being published over two years ago, there has been very little progress in the implementation of the recommendations. In fact, QIDAN discovers in this report that **only 3% of recommendations have been genuinely implemented**, and 53% of recommendations have no progress we can report on. The lack of action taken by federal and state and territory governments to implement the DRC has significantly impacted the people

who shared their experiences with the Commission, and has eroded public confidence that governments are committed to a truly inclusive Australia.

In July 2024, the Australian and Queensland governments released reports detailing their responses to each recommendation made by the DRC, advising whether each recommendation was:

- Accepted
- Accepted in principle
- Subjected to further information
- Noted
- Rejected

QIDAN analysed the reports and noted many of the governments' responses to recommendations were sometimes misleading and did not adequately address the actual intent of the DRC, nor provide strong or clear commitment to the changes the DRC proposed. More information on QIDAN's findings can be found in [QIDAN's Position Paper on the Government Responses to the DRC](#).

Timeline – from the final report to the present

In September 2024, the Disability Reform Ministerial Council (**DRMC**) released a [Disability Reform Roadmap for 2024 and 2025](#) (the **Roadmap**), which provided a brief overview and timeline of the key deliverables for major disability reform pieces, including the DRC, National Disability Insurance Scheme (**NDIS**) reform, Foundational Supports, and Australia's Disability Strategy (**ADS**). The Roadmap clearly stated:

- an interim joint progress update on the DRC was due in December 2024
- the first national implementation progress report was due in June 2025, and
- the second progress report is due in December 2025¹.

It is important to note the first national implementation progress report was only published in late November 2025.

After the Roadmap was published, the Queensland Government committed over \$160 million to disability reform in the Queensland 2024-25 Budget, including investment for the co-designed implementation of the DRC.

In December 2024, the Australian, state and territory governments published a report titled the [National Interim Update 2024](#). The stated intention of this short report was to provide a “snapshot” of the work governments are doing on certain recommendations². However, as we will discuss throughout our report, the activities described in the National Interim Update 2024 report do not adequately meet the intention of the recommendations made by the DRC. The report also reiterated “All governments have agreed that biannual reporting arrangements will commence from June 2025”³.

Following the National Interim Update 2024 report, there was very little communication from the governments about the DRC for most of 2025. The first meaningful update on the DRC was mentioned in the [DRMC Communiqué](#) dated 6 June 2025, which stated Ministers “reiterated their commitment to the implementation of the joint government’ response to the Disability Royal Commission recommendation as a priority for the DRMC and agreed to endorse the Biannual report out of session by the end of August 2025”⁴. QIDAN believe this is a reference to the first national implementation progress report. This report was not released in August. Then, on the 30th of July 2025, an updated [Disability reform roadmap](#) was published.

In October 2025, QIDAN reached out to Queensland’s Minister for Disability to ask when the report will be published, and the response received from the Minister offered no information on its status nor due date.

Finally, on 27 November 2025, governments released the [Disability Royal Commission Progress Report 2025](#), providing federal and state-based updates on each recommendation⁵. Upon review of this report, QIDAN was disappointed by its lack of genuine updates, especially from the Queensland Government.

Alongside the DRC Progress Report 2025, The Queensland Government released a new and updated version of the [Queensland Government Response to the DRC](#), changing the Queensland Government’s position on several recommendations⁶. In fact, the Queensland Government reduced their commitment for two recommendations, and altered their

supporting commentary for 37 other recommendations. Some of the changes that concern QIDAN include:

- Recommendation 4.30 (b) regarding vilification because of disability, which was originally accepted in principle but subsequently changed to subjected to further consideration.
- Recommendation 8.16 regarding enabling First Nations organisations to support First Nations peoples with disability in custody, where the Queensland Government originally stated in their response that they accepted the recommendation “to ensure First Nation peoples in custody or under supervision are managed in a culturally sensitive and culturally safe manner”⁷. The response was then altered to remove this sentence⁸.
- Recommendation 9.1 regarding culturally appropriate parenting capacity assessments, which was originally accepted in full by the Queensland Government but subsequently changed to accepted in principle.⁹

It is crucial to note QIDAN could not find any press from the Queensland Government prior to releasing the updated version of its response to the DRC, and the changes made in the new response paper are not clearly identified within the new response document. Though QIDAN do note that the DRC Progress Report 2025 contains several statements about the updated Queensland response, the statements are scattered, inconsistent, and are not made on every relevant recommendation. This means that QIDAN only learned of all the content changed by the current Queensland Government by performing a side-by-side comparison of the original and updated response reports. Covertly changing and downgrading commitments to certain recommendations sets a dangerous precedent, and QIDAN will monitor any future updates made by the Queensland Government.

QIDAN's ongoing commitment to the Disability Royal Commission

QIDAN intend for this analysis to be an annual exercise, and we hope to publish this type of report annually to keep our communities up to date. For this analysis report, QIDAN used information that is publicly available. In many cases, this meant reviewing media statements, articles, reviews of policies and strategies, announcements of reviews into policies and strategies, amendments to legislation, information on consultations, and information from

government websites. We use the following terms to indicate how far each recommendation is in the implementation process:

- **Rejected:** The government/s responsible for implementing this recommendation has shown they have no intent to implement it.
- **No Update:** The government/s responsible have either made no public comment regarding implementation of the recommendation, have made no clear attempt at implementation, or the attempt has been cited by the government/s for the recommendation does not actually align with the recommendation.
- **Beginning stages:** The government/s responsible have started a review, plan or program that will inform the future implementation of the recommendation, but no further work has occurred.
- **In progress:** The government/s responsible have implemented a review, plan or program aligning with the recommendation. The government/s may also have started pilot projects or other initial steps that will likely lead to full implementation in the future.
- **Implemented:** The government/s responsible have implemented the recommendation in line with the DRC's intention.

The process of analysing the implementation of the DRC recommendations was challenging and time-consuming. For QIDAN, it put into perspective how difficult it would be for the every-day person to try to keep up to date with the DRC. Often, the updates we discovered were not directly attributed to the DRC, meaning QIDAN had to use discretion to decide whether an action taken by government or other body truly reflected the intent of a DRC recommendation. Because our analysis is based on what is publicly available, and our own discretion, it may not reflect the most recent developments. In an effort to ensure we present accurate information sections of this analysis were provided to relevant Government Departments and agencies prior to release to offer an opportunity for feedback on any publicly available information we may have missed or misrepresented.

QIDAN is committed to promoting and defending the rights of people with disability, and we are hopeful the implementation of the DRC will eliminate the conditions leading to Australians with disability being targeted by violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The disability

community deserve to play an active role in the disability reform, and QIDAN strives to ensure the DRC is not forgotten.

Volume 7 (b) : Inclusive employment

Recommendations 7.16 – 7.17: New Disability Employment Services Model and education and training resources

Responsibility: Australian Government

Response: Accept

Update: In progress

Recommendations 7.16 and 7.17 call for improvements to the Disability Employment Services model, requesting the development of the new Disability Employment Services model be co-designed, flexible and customisable. The Australian Government has since launched the new disability employment program ‘Inclusive Employment Australia’¹⁰ as well as the ‘Centre for Inclusive Employment’¹¹. These two new programs directly align with recommendations 7.16 and 7.17. Since these two programs are still new, resources are still being developed and changes to policies (like funding arrangements) are yet to be seen in effect.

Recommendations 7.18 – 7.23: Improving Access to Employment

Responsibility: Australian, state and territory governments

Response: Accept in principle

Update: Beginning stages

Recommendations 7.18 through to 7.23 refer to improving people with disability’s access to employment in the public sector. These recommendations are directed at the Australian Public Service Commission and governments, asking for these bodies to adopt targets to increase employment levels, amend principles and policies and increase reporting on the progress of disability employment strategies. The Australian Public Services Commission established a DRC Discovery Project¹² to investigate the implementation of these recommendations. Unfortunately, the public sector is yet to reach its goal of 7% employees with disability, with most recent data demonstrating that only 5.5% of employees have disability¹³.

Recommendation 7.24: Convene a Disability Employment Rights Council

Responsibility: Australian Government

Response: Note

Update: No update

This recommendation asks the Australian Government to convene a Disability Employment Rights Council. This recommendation does not appear to be progressing.

Recommendation 7.25: Updating the Fair Work Act

Responsibility: Australian Government

Response: Accept in principle

Update: Beginning stages

Recommendation 7.25 asks for the amendment of the *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)* to align with the definition of ‘disability’ used within the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*. The Australian Government completed its consultation into the review of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* on the 14th of November 2025¹⁴ but there have been no further updates on how this review will affect the *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*.

Recommendation 7.26: Amend the Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Responsibility: Australian Government

Response: Accept in principle

Update: Beginning stages

Recommendation 7.26 calls for amendments to the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* to expand the factors considered when making reasonable adjustments. The Australian Government is currently undergoing a review of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*. It is yet to be seen whether the outcomes of this review align with these recommendations.

Recommendation 7.27: Enable a Fair Work Ombudsman referral mechanism

Responsibility: Australian Government

Response: Accept

Update: Implemented

Recommendation 7.27 asks for an expansion of the functions of the Fair Work Ombudsman (state and territory governments) to include a referral function for people with disability to have their complaint addressed by the Fair Work Ombudsman. In its initial response, the Australian

Government stated it already has statutory functions allowing for referrals back to the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Recommendation 7.28: Improve information about wages and the Disability Support Pension

Responsibility: Australian Government

Response: Accept

Update: Implemented

Recommendation 7.28 calls for the improvement of information on wages and the disability support pension. As of November 2025, the Australian Government has funded a new Disability Employment Advocacy and Information Program¹⁵ which has replaced the Disability Employment Services. With this new program, Inclusive Employment Australia will progressively offer resources, tools, and training. There has also been allocation of funding for Supported Employment and Advocacy Project¹⁶ throughout Australia. This enables eight advocacy organisations to enact employment advocacy. These programs are currently underway, and ADA Australia have been funded to provide advocacy and information in Queenslanders until 2027.

Recommendation 7.29: Embed an ‘open employment first’ approach in the NDIS Participant Employment Strategy

Responsibility: Australian Government

Response: Accept

Update: In progress

Recommendation 7.29 recommends an ‘open employment first’ approach in the NDIS Participant Employment Strategy. The Strategy should also provide training to Local Area Coordinators, National Disability Insurance Agency planners, and support coordinators on supporting participants to achieve goals in open employment. The Australian Government has since launched the new NDIS Participant Employment Strategy 2024-2026. One of the stated outcomes of the Strategy is that participants should have real choice and control in where they work and who supports them¹⁷. This aligns with the recommendation 7.29, however, the effectiveness of this strategy is yet to be seen.

Recommendation 7.30: Support the transition to inclusive employment

Responsibility: Australian Government

Response: Accept in principle

Update: No update

Recommendation 7.30 proposes the Australian Department of Social Services develop a plan to support people with disability working in Australian Disability Enterprises to move to inclusive, open employment options. Though the Australian Government has since made updates to its Supported Employment Plan¹⁸ to better reflect recommendation 7.30, the Supported Employment Plan does not directly address ending segregated employment.

Recommendation 7.31: Raise subminimum wages

Responsibility: Australian Government

Response: Subject to further consideration

Update: Beginning stages

Recommendation 7.31 asks the Australian Government to raise subminimum wages for people with disability to at least 50% of the current minimum wage. This recommendation was subject to consultation in the discussion paper “Next steps in Supported Employment: consultation on the way forward”. It is yet to be seen what came from this consultation and whether this recommendation will be implemented. Given the incompatibility of subminimum wages with human rights obligations set out in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Australian Government’s response to this recommendation is disappointing.

Recommendation 7.32: End segregated employment by 2034

Responsibility: Australian, state and territory governments

Response: Subject to further consideration

Update: Beginning stages

Recommendation 7.32 sets a deadline to end segregated employment by 2034, recommending the development and implementation of a National Inclusive Employment Roadmap to transform Australian Disability Enterprises, and the elimination of subminimum wages. Though a new Inclusive Employment Australia program has been launched, there is no news on the development of the roadmap yet. This recommendation is subject to consultation

on the discussion paper “Next steps in Supported Employment: consultation on the way forward”.

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- ¹⁵ Disability Advocacy Network Australia. (2024, April 29) *Employment Advocacy for People with Disability*. <https://dana.org.au/employment-advocacy-for-people-with-disability/>
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