



Update from the Commissioner

Welcome to our first newsletter for the year. I'm pleased to let you know that we are well and truly back in the swing of things for 2025.

We were thrilled to once again sponsor the VALID Having a Say Conference in Geelong and spread the message that people with all types of intellectual disability are able to come to us with complaints and concerns about disability workers. It was great to meet so many people from across the disability sector, chat about the work we do and the importance of feeling safe and empowered with your disability worker and service.

I also had the pleasure of participating in our 'What does quality support mean to you?' workshop alongside Jen Jackson-Hall, the Disability Services Commissioner. It was a fantastic opportunity for participants to share examples of great support from a disability worker and what has made them feel happy, safe and respected. We've got some photos and more information about our time at the conference below.

The Commission team, the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria and I are looking forward to meeting with many of you throughout the year to work together on continuing to build a safer, stronger disability sector in Victoria.

Upcoming events

Free online webinar

School issues: where to go for help

Guest speakers

Dan Stubbs

Victorian Disability Worker Commissioner

Liana Buchanan

Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People

Frank Handy

Chair, Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution

Karen Dimmock

CEO ACD

School issues: where to go for help webinar

If your child is having issues at school, it can be very stressful, but raising a concern can help address these issues and improve the situation.

To explain what help can be provided to families, the Association for Children with Disability (ACD) is hosting a free webinar on Wednesday 26 February at 7.30pm which will feature the following speakers:

- Dan Stubbs, the Victorian Disability Worker Commissioner
- Liana Buchanan, Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People
- Frank Handy, Chair of the Independent Office for School Dispute Resolution
- Karen Dimmock, CEO, ACD

We'll discuss the types of concerns you can raise, what help is available, and how to work with the school for a better outcome for your child.

This is a unique opportunity to gain valuable information and not to be missed!

To register for your free ticket visit <https://bit.ly/SchoolFeb25>

OFFICIAL

Out and about

VALID Having a Say Conference 2025

The Victorian Disability Worker Commission was proud to sponsor the 2025 VALID Having a Say Conference. VALID is the peak body for intellectual disability and it was great to interact with so many people from right across the disability sector. There were more than 500 attendees across the three days and over 50 organisations exhibiting and/or sponsoring, including disability service providers, peak bodies, government and community organisations.

Highlights included:

- Commissioner Dan Stubbs delivering the keynote speech during the opening ceremony where he spoke about how quality support means respect and participation for people with disability and that quality disability workers support people with disability to be able to participate more fully in the community.
- Our 'What does quality support mean to you?' workshop. Delivered in conjunction with the Disability Services Commissioner, we were joined by 30 participants and talked about the importance of great support from a disability worker. Some of the key themes we heard from participants included being listened to, their decisions being respected and being supported to reach their goals. Check out the illustration below to see more insights from the workshop.
- Most importantly, the valuable conversations we had at our booth, with people with disability, support workers, carers and others from across the sector about supporting safety and quality in the disability sector.



Illustration from a Victorian Disability Worker Commission workshop on 28 January 2025 provided by Think In Colour.



Image descriptions: Image 1 - Commission staff smiling at the VDWCC booth. Image 2 - Commissioner Dan Stubbs on stage giving his keynote speech. Image 3 - Commission staff in a room with participants for our 'What does quality

support mean to you?' workshop. Image 4 - A multi coloured illustration showing what makes a great disability support worker.

Midsumma Pride March 2025

The 2025 Midsumma Pride March was a wonderful celebration of diversity, inclusion and community. Commissioner Dan Stubbs and Commission staff were proud to march alongside People with Disability Australia and the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Pride Network, in support of LGBTQIA+ people with disability and disability workers.

It was great to see such strong participation and support again this year. The Commission remains committed to supporting the rights of the LGBTQIA+ disability community and encourages anyone who has concerns about their disability worker to contact us via our [online form](#) or to call us on 1800 497 132.





Image descriptions: Image 1 - DFFH and VDWC staff smiling and holding a colour banner at the march. Image 2 - Commissioner Dan Stubbs and President of People with Disability Australia, Trinity Ford. Image 3 - Commissioner Dan Stubbs with a People with Disability Australia staff member.

Hearing from Aboriginal community members

The Commission is committed to building relationships with Victoria's Aboriginal community. We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are more likely to be living with disability than other Australians and we want to ensure that everyone receives safe, quality disability services. We also recognise that for Aboriginal people with disability, engaging with services such as our complaint service, can be difficult.

We are working to build a more culturally safe organisation to better serve all Victorians. As part of this work, Commission representatives, joined by Deaf Indigenous Community Consulting and Karabena Consulting recently visited Geelong, Wyndham Vale and Bendigo to meet with community members, advocates and disability support workers to learn more about the experiences of Indigenous communities when using disability support or working in the sector, and how the Commission can better support First Nations communities.

Participants highlighted the importance of cultural safety, collaboration between agencies, and clear accountability, with a strong focus on listening to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Community members obtained lots of information to share. We are committed to continuing to build partnerships and engagement in 2025.

In the media

Link to... News

Victorian Disability Worker Commission

Helping you choose a quality disability worker.



It's important that people with disability feel safe and empowered when using disability services.

There is a huge amount of trust involved between a disability worker and a person with disability, and in a sea filled with different service providers and funding sources, it can be hard to find a 'quality catch'.

What makes a quality worker will be different for each person with disability, depending on the level of support or service they require. How a worker makes you feel should always be considered and it's important to ask yourself a few questions about this:

- Does my worker make me feel safe?
- Do I feel respected by my worker?
- Does my worker provide me with high-quality care?

Disability workers who are registered with the Victorian Disability Worker Commission (VDWC) have been assessed on their background, qualifications, experience and skills, so you can be assured knowing they have the right attributes for safe practice.

All Victorian disability workers must comply with the Disability Service Safeguards Code of Conduct (the Code), regardless of their funding source. The Code is a legal obligation underpinned by Respect, Quality and Safety and identifies the requirements workers must follow when providing supports or services to people with disability.

If you're concerned that a disability worker's behaviour or quality of their work isn't in line with the Code, you can make a complaint to the VDWC. They provide an independent, free, and confidential complaints service where you can discuss your concerns. Whether you're a person with disability, a family member or carer of someone with disability – you have the right to make a complaint.

This was the case for Tom*, whose parents made a complaint about Sonia*, an unregistered disability worker engaged to provide wound management, personal care and monitoring of skin integrity for Tom, a child with a fragile skin condition. Tom's parents had seen Sonia touching Tom's skin without using the necessary protective materials, which was inconsistent with Tom's personal care plan.

The VDWC contacted Sonia about the complaint. Sonia acknowledged that on several occasions she had not used the required protective materials, which increased the risk of skin tears and infections.

Sonia explained that she did not feel comfortable using the materials but had not checked in with Tom or his parents about her concerns.

Sonia was counselled about her obligations under the Code, which requires disability workers to provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill, and the importance of following care plans to achieve this.

If you're unsure whether your concern is something you can make a complaint about, you can call the VDWC on **1800 497 132** to discuss. Don't wait until the issue is serious.

To learn more visit vdwc.vic.gov.au

*This case study shows a type of matter the VDWC responded to. Pseudonyms are used and some details have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants. ■

40 February/March 2025

If a disability worker does something that doesn't feel right, we're here for you.

The Victorian Disability Worker Commission can deal with your concerns about a disability worker's behaviour or quality of their work. Our complaints service is **confidential**, and we can take action if something isn't right.

Because people with disability deserve to feel safe.



Scan the QR code for more information about complaints.

If you have concerns about a disability worker visit vdwc.vic.gov.au/complaints or call 1800 497 132.

You can also meet us face-to-face or contact us via the National Relay Service, including for Auslan interpreters. Call 1300 555 727 or SMS 0423 677 767.



Victorian Disability Worker Commission

Helping you choose a quality disability worker

The Victorian Disability Worker Commission recently featured in Link Disability Magazine discussing what makes a quality disability worker and the importance of feeling safe, respected and empowered when using disability services.

Disability workers who are registered with the VDWC have been assessed on their background, qualifications, experience and skills, so you can rest assured knowing they have the right attributes for safe practice.

Read all about it on pages 40-41 [here](#).

Resources and Support

Training and Development Catalogue

To support professional development, the VDWC and the Disability Worker Registration Board of Victoria have created a Training and Development Catalogue to assist disability workers with building their knowledge and skills to work safely and competently.

The catalogue contains over 200 training courses, resources and activities across a wide variety of specialty types, delivery methods and skill levels. It provides disability workers with a single resource to search and connect with appropriate training, and the ability to filter to specific topics or areas of interest.

Access the catalogue [here](#).

Human Rights Solutions, a new consultancy service offered by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

Human Rights Solutions brings the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's 40 years of expertise in addressing systemic issues and building capabilities for enduring change, to the private sector. Human Rights Solutions enables the private sector to engage the Commission to help them navigate human rights complexities, ensuring safe, fair, and inclusive workplaces with high standards of integrity and transparency.

To learn more [click here](#).

Become a registered worker

Have you been thinking about becoming a registered disability worker?

If you're unsure why registration is so important for people with disability and the wider sector, [click here](#) to read some of our registered worker's stories.

Registration is currently free and shows you're committed to raising the quality of the disability

workforce and delivering safe, respectful services.

Through registration, the VDWC seeks to increase safeguards across the entire disability sector, creating better choices for people with disability.

To learn more about registration visit vdwc.vic.gov.au/registration

Keep in touch

If our e-newsletter was forwarded to you and you'd like to subscribe please go to: vdwc.vic.gov.au/subscribe

If you have any questions or comments, please get in touch via our website [Contact us](#) page, send an email to info@vdwc.vic.gov.au or call us on 1800 497 132.

For more information visit vdwc.vic.gov.au