

Thursday 27 June 2019

The little things matter in disability services

When Francesca first acquired her brain injury, she felt scared and alone. “I was unable to speak or walk, and people sometimes treated me badly. I felt like I was worth less than them.”

A recent research project launched by the Disability Services Commissioner has identified the importance of positive cultures in promoting safety and respect for people with disability.

“This report highlights the challenges and strategies used by people with a disability when it comes to speaking up about their experiences.” said Disability Services Commissioner Arthur Rogers “The culture of an organisation can make a real difference when people are considering whether to speak up or stay silent. Creating a culture where feedback and complaints are welcomed is an area that requires ongoing commitment.”

The report ‘Building Safe and Respectful Cultures’ was a pilot research project exploring the prevention of violence, abuse and neglect of people with disability in Victoria. The research team included community researchers with lived experience of disability, including current President of Brain Injury Matters Francesca Lee.

Ms Lee noted that many people did not raise concerns for fear that speaking up may have a negative impact on the way they are treated in the future.

“When you are so reliant on your workers for day to day support it can be really challenging to say when something isn’t right in case it makes the situation worse. This is a real fear, especially when so many of us have experienced or witnessed abuse, neglect and discrimination.” she said.

This project gave us some very clear insights and direction. Little things that may not seem big to others can have a huge impact on people with disability. Service providers must listen to their clients, and promote a culture where everyone is encouraged to speak up.

“The timing of the study is particularly resonant, and we hope the research is used to further promote the rights of people with disability. We all must work towards stopping abuse and neglect before it starts.” Commissioner Rogers said.

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Media please note:

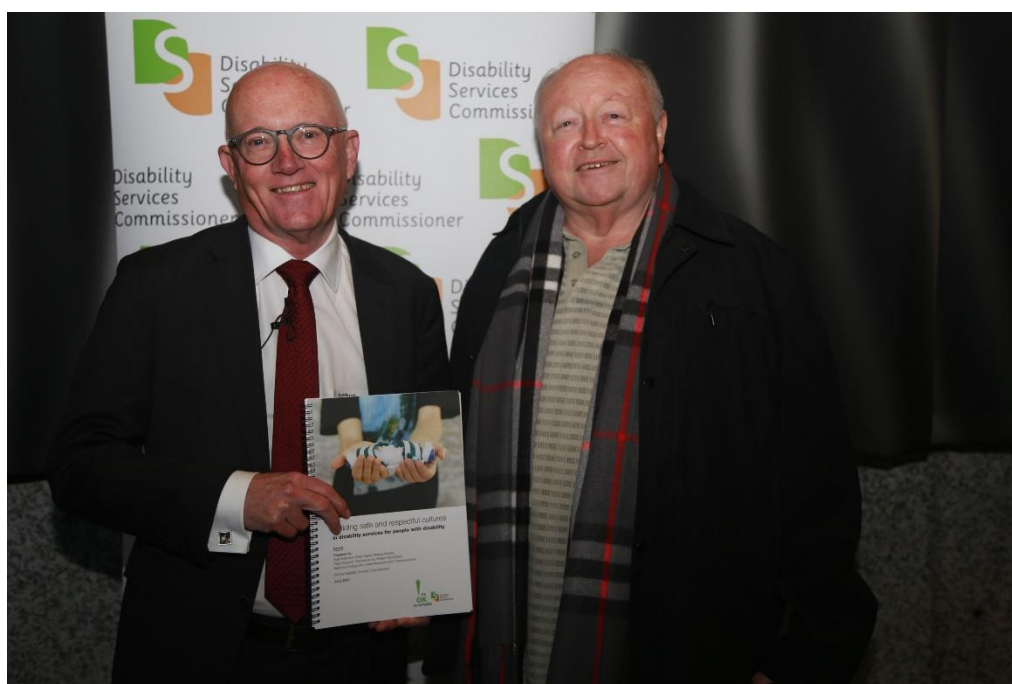
The report ‘Building Safe and Respectful Cultures’ is available on the Disability Services Commissioner [website](#).

Disability Services Commissioner Arthur Rogers and the Community Researchers are available for media interviews, and more images are available.

To arrange an interview or for more information please contact Cate Mansfield 0412 105 500



Minister Donnellan, Peta Ferguson, William Ward-Boas, Francesca Lee and Disability Services Commissioner Rogers



Disability Services Commissioner Rogers and former commissioner Laurie Harkin AM