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## **Women and girls with Disability still face Endemic Violence**

Australian Lawyers for Human Rights (ALHR) has expressed alarm at the latest findings reported by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women and girls's Safety (ANROWS) in its [Women and girls, disability and violence: Barriers to accessing justice report](#). ALHR is deeply concerned by the pervasive and widespread violence and abuse experienced by women and girls and girls with disabilities across a range of settings in Australia. It is apparent that despite numerous reports and inquiries, there has been no meaningful action on existing recommendations to ensure everyday security and safety for women and girls and girls with disabilities.

Susan Peukert, Chair of ALHR's Disability Rights Sub-committee said, "ALHR calls for immediate, fully funded action at the State, Territory and Federal level to address violence perpetrated against all persons with disabilities."

"In ALHR's view, it is unacceptable that Australian women and girls with disabilities experience disproportionately high rates of violence and abuse. Not only is this a violation of their fundamental human rights but it perpetuates the hardship and denial of equitable opportunities experienced by women and girls with disabilities in all spheres of life. The devaluing of the lives and status of women and girls with disabilities is the root cause of much of the violence and abuse against women and girls with disabilities."

International Human Rights standards recognise that women and girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and that women and girls and children with disabilities are subject to multiple forms of discrimination that warrant specific protection. ALHR is calling for specific measures aimed at protecting women and girls from violence and abuse.

Associate Professor Rita Shackel Co-Chair of ALHR's Women and girls and Girls' Rights Subcommittee said, "The types of violence and abuse reported by ANROWS violate international human rights laws, including the right to liberty and security of person, the right to freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the right to freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse. Australia is obliged to act to prevent such human rights abuses and should do so as a matter of urgency."

Peukert continued, "ALHR renews its calls for domestic law reform within Australia and for the Federal Government to step up as a leader in the development of enhanced, international measures consistent with the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) and the *UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and girls* (CEDAW), to protect the human rights of all women and girls with disabilities to be free from violence and abuse."

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*ALHR was established in 1993 and is a national association of Australian solicitors, barristers, academics, judicial officers and law students who practise and promote international human rights law in Australia. ALHR has active and engaged National, State and Territory committees and specialist thematic committees. Through advocacy, media engagement, education, networking, research and training, ALHR promotes, practices and protects universally accepted standards of human rights throughout Australia and overseas.*