

As a person living with a disability, who specialises in disability and trauma consulting for a living, I find/found the government's messaging and general perception of people with disabilities during the pandemic to be extremely ableist, and more importantly, deeply offensive, and believe it to be setting an extremely dangerous precedent.

Stereotypes surrounding individuals with disabilities, perpetuated by your crude and generalised 'health' messaging, have directly and harmfully contributed to the already existing perpetuations of ableism, fostering greater discrimination, and reinforcing dangerous societal misconceptions.

Specifically, the stereotype that you have continuously, and publicly suggested, that simply by proxy of being 'disabled' that that automatically implies we have compromised immune systems, and therefore assumes that all disabled individuals are inherently more susceptible to negative health issues. This stereotype not only oversimplifies the complex relationship between disability and health but also perpetuates ableist attitudes, hindering the full integration of disabled individuals into society.

Assuming a universal correlation between disability and compromised immune systems oversimplifies the intricate interplay between different health aspects. Not all disabilities are inherently linked to weakened immune responses, as each disability has its unique characteristics and health implications. This has led to systemic discrimination, limiting access to opportunities, healthcare, and social engagement. Moreover, the assumption that disabled individuals are more susceptible to health issues can result in the neglect of their overall well-being, overlooking the importance of tailored healthcare solutions and accommodations.

Excluding the blatant fear mongering perpetuated by not only yourselves, but the main stream media, I myself, a male in my 30's who takes great pride in my physical fitness and wellbeing, find it deeply offensive that your so-called experts publicly degree that I am somehow at a greater risk than a morbidly obese male chain smoker in their 50's/60's. The evidence surrounding Covid and the risk it poses was crystal clear from the beginning, and rather than being open and transparent about said risk to those who are morbidly obese, you chose to alienate and segregate me from my peers and colleagues because of the stereotype that I must therefore have compromised immune system.

I agree that obesity is an issue within the disabled community based on our limited physical capacity, however, to publicly amplify harmful stereotypes about the capacity of my immune system is deeply rooted in hateful ableism. During a time whereby the public became fearful of infection and of potential interaction with said infectious persons, I was, again based on a stereotype you perpetuated, perceived to be a greater risk because of my 'disability'. Rather than expressing that the science clearly dictated whom was most at risk, that being the elderly and those with 3-4 or more comorbidities, you instead decided to scapegoat disabled people as toxic disease-ridden invalids who needed to be protected and separated from society.

Rather than emphasizing the importance of individualized healthcare, personal accountability and provide sound practical advice such as healthy eating, diet and exercise, your health messaging perpetrated an already harmful stereotype, and in doing so, only contributed to the difficulties that disabled people face every day. You offered no hope or encouragement in a time whereby we needed it most.

I am extremely embarrassed and dismayed by the actions of all associated government bodies and

so-called health experts, who instead of promoting healthy living, decided to foster a culture of fear and segregation, all so that you could push a product that literally failed to do its designated purpose of preventing infection. Rather than encourage health literacy and accountability of one's own health care, you allowed people to buy into harmful stereotypes, doing literally nothing to address the scientifically proven connection to obesity and negative outcomes, and instead used me and my disability as a scapegoat for your gross incompetence and ineptitude. In doing so, you dangerously created a false confidence that these people were 'protected from infection', and directly exposed those with genuinely impaired immune systems to non-disabled individuals who were in fact still very contagious. Every death in the disabled community post rollout is blood on the hands of those who perpetuated this fraud.

The greatest insult is that this all occurred during a Royal Commission into Abuse of Disabled people. Imagine the gall and complete ignorance displayed to literally use Disabled people (the vulnerable) as leverage for compliance and to coerce citizens into taking a medical intervention that didn't prevent transmission. I find it sickening that in a time of scientific and cultural enlightenment, that government officials and those endorsed by said government believe it to be acceptable to use my life story, my trauma and pain, my vulnerability and lived experience as a tool for public manipulation. It's disgusting and I expect far better from our government bodies.

I do not, nor ever will, consent to governments using me a scapegoat to push false hope and flawed health interventions on the Australian people. Blatantly manipulating people into taking a health intervention to 'protect the vulnerable', knowing the entire time, these treatments did not stop infection is the greatest travesty and fraud committed in my lifetime.

I demand accountability for this and believe we must have a Royal Commission to address the Pandemic response. Without a full investigation, this harmful behaviour will no doubt be replicated in the future.