



**Royal Commission**  
into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation  
of People with Disability

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# About the Disability Royal Commission

Easy Read version



## How to use this document



The Disability Royal Commission  
(the Royal Commission) wrote this document.

When you see the word 'we', it means  
the Royal Commission.



We have written this document in an easy  
to read way. We use pictures to explain  
some ideas.



We have written some words in **bold**.  
We explain what these words mean.  
There is a list of these words on page 25.



This Easy Read document is a summary  
of another document.



You can find the other document on **our website**.



You can ask for help to read this document.  
A friend, family member or support person  
may be able to help you.

## What's in this document?

What is this Royal Commission about?	4
Who are the Commissioners?	9
How does the Royal Commission do its job?	11
Sharing your story with the Royal Commission	18
Counselling support	19
Support for people who speak other languages	21
Getting legal support and advice	23
Word list	25
How to contact us	29

## What is this Royal Commission about?



A **Royal Commission** is an official way of looking into an important problem.



This Royal Commission is called the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.



We usually call it the Royal Commission.

We need the Royal Commission because we know that people with disability experience:



- **violence** – if someone is hurting you physically



- **abuse** – if someone is treating you badly



- **neglect** – if someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you



- **exploitation** – if someone is taking advantage of you.

We also know that these things can happen to people with disability in different places, like:



- schools



- where they work



- jails and detention centres



- places where people with disability live and are cared for



- places where people who need support for their mental health live and are cared for



- group homes or boarding houses



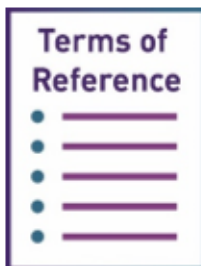
- their family home



- hospitals



- day programs.



The **Terms of Reference** is a list of the things a Royal Commission must look at.



You can find more information about the Terms of Reference on **our website**.

Our Terms of Reference tell us we must look at the experiences of people with disability so we:



- really understand what has happened



- use this information to make **recommendations** to the Australian Government.



Recommendations are ideas about what could be done to make things better.



We will write reports for the Australian Government.

Our final report will include our recommendations.



We will base these on the experiences of people with disability.



We want to hear from:

- people with disability
- families
- their supporters
- support workers
- organisations
- the wider community.



## Who are the Commissioners?



The Honourable Ronald Sackville leads the Royal Commission.

He is called the Chair of the Royal Commission.

The other Commissioners are:



- the Honourable Roslyn Atkinson



- Commissioner Barbara Bennett



- Commissioner Rhonda Galbally



- Commissioner Andrea Mason



- Commissioner Alastair McEwin



- Commissioner John Ryan.



2 of our Commissioners are people with disability.



2 of our Commissioners used to be judges.



These Commissioners have a lot of experience with:

- the law
- looking into important problems.



1 of our Commissioners is from a First Nations community.

First Nations people are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## How does the Royal Commission do its job?

3

There are 3 main parts to our work.



We hold public hearings.



We listen to people's experiences and stories.



We research things that affect people with disability.

We talk about our work in more detail on the following pages.

## We hold public hearings



The Royal Commission holds public **hearings**.



A hearing is a **formal, public** meeting.



When something is formal, there are strict rules about how it should be done.

When something is public:



- anyone can watch
- we share the records of what happened so anyone can read them.



We will share the records of our public hearings on our website.

In a public hearing, the Royal Commission:



- calls **witnesses**



A witness is a person who saw or knew that something happened.



- asks people to give us **evidence**.



When you give evidence, you tell your story.



We listen to people's evidence during our public hearings.

## We listen to people's stories



We want to hear from:

- people with disability
- their families
- their supporters.



Listening to people's stories helps us understand what:

- is not working well
- needs to be done to fix it.



There are two ways to share your story with the Royal Commission. You can:

- make a submission
- ask for a private session.



A submission is a document or recording that explains your experience or an idea you have.



The Commissioners will:

- read your submission
- watch your submission
- listen to your submission.



A private session is a private meeting between:

- someone with a story to tell
- 1 or 2 of our Commissioners.



You can have a private session:

- in person
- over the phone
- by video.



We will keep the information from your private session confidential.



If you ask us to keep your session confidential, we will not:

- share the information
- say who gave us the information.



Anyone can apply for a private session, including:



- people with disability



- family members



- supporters.



## We research things that affect people with disability



The Royal Commission researches things that affect people with disability.



We work with researchers who:

- look for answers to big questions
- report back to us.



An **issue** is a subject or problem that people are thinking and talking about.



We write issues papers to find out what the community thinks about some important issues.



Our issues papers have questions for people to answer.



Anyone can send us:

- answers to our questions
- ideas they want to tell us about.

## Counselling support



Seeing or hearing news about the Royal Commission will be hard for some people.



Sharing your story can be hard too.



You can get support to help you with any feelings you might have because of the Royal Commission.

We can offer you counselling support:



- before you take part in the Royal Commission
- while you are taking part in the Royal Commission
- after you have taken part in the Royal Commission.



We have counsellors who go to all our:

- public hearings
- private sessions
- community forums.

Blue Knot Foundation offers free counselling support to anyone who needs it.



You can contact Blue Knot Foundation:

- by phone:  
**1800 421 468**



They are open every day.



If you have a speech or hearing impairment, you can call the National Relay Service.

**133 677**



Tell them the number you want to call is

**(02) 6146 1468**



If you need to communicate in a different way, you can use:

- online chat
- email.



You can send Blue Knot Foundation an email

**[helpline@blueknot.org.au](mailto:helpline@blueknot.org.au)**

## Support for people who speak other languages



You can share your experience with the Royal Commission in:

- English
- another language you speak
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- Auslan.



If you speak a language other than English, an **interpreter** or **translator** can help you.



An interpreter is someone who:

- speaks the language you understand
- can help you understand what someone says when they speak a different language.



A translator is someone who can help you:

- understand what something written in a different language says
- write what you want to say in a different language.

If you speak a language other than English,  
please contact:



- the National Counselling and Referral Service

**1800 421 468**

Ask them for an interpreter.



- TIS – Translating and Interpreting Service

**131 450**



If you would like a copy of any of our documents  
in Braille, please call us on

**1800 517 199**

## Getting legal support and advice



If you need legal support and advice, we have a free service you can use.



The service is run by Your Story Disability Legal Support.



You can contact them by phone on **1800 771 800**



You can call them from Monday to Friday during work hours.



You can visit their website.

[www.yourstorydisabilitylegal.org.au](http://www.yourstorydisabilitylegal.org.au)

This service can help you:



- understand how the Royal Commission works



- share your story in a:
  - submission
  - private session



- help you write a witness **statement**



A statement is a formal description of something that:

- happened in the past
- is happening now.



- give you advice about legal matters that might affect you



- give you information about **financial assistance**.



Financial assistance is extra money you might be able to get to help you.



## Word list



### Confidential

If you ask us to keep your session confidential, we will not:

- share the information
- say who gave us the information.



### Counselling support

Counselling support is when you:

- talk to someone about how you think and feel
- talk about ways to help you feel better.



### Evidence

When you give evidence, you tell your story in a formal setting with lawyers.



### Financial assistance

Financial assistance is extra money you might be able to get to help you.



### Formal

When something is formal, there are strict rules about how it should be done.



## Hearing

A hearing is a formal, public meeting we will hold.

## Interpreter



An interpreter is someone who:

- speaks the language you understand
- can help you understand what someone says when they speak a different language.



## Issue

An issue is a subject or problem that people are thinking and talking about.

## Private session



A private session is a private meeting between:

- someone with a story to tell
- 1 or 2 of our Commissioners.



## Public

When something is public:

- anyone can watch
- we share the records of what happened so anyone can read them.



## Recommendations

Recommendations are ideas about what could be done to make things better.



## Royal Commission

A Royal Commission is an official way of looking into an important problem.



## Statement

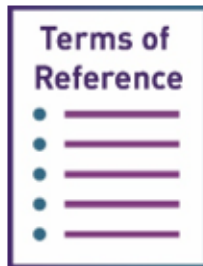
A statement is a formal description of something that:

- happened in the past
- is happening now.



## **Submission**

A submission is a document that explains a person's experience or idea.



## **Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference is a list of the things a Royal Commission must look at.

## **Translator**

A translator is someone who can help you:



- understand what something written in a different language says
- write what you want to say in a different language.



## **Witness**

A witness is a person who saw or knew that something happened.

## How to contact us



You can email us at  
**[DRConquiries@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:DRConquiries@royalcommission.gov.au)**



If you have a question, you can call us on  
**1800 517 199.**



We are available on Monday to Friday between  
9am and 5pm.



We are not available on public holidays.



You can also call the National Relay Service  
on **133 677.**



You can write to us at:

GPO Box 1422  
Brisbane  
QLD 4001

You can follow us on:



Facebook

[www.facebook.com/disability.royalcommission.gov.au](http://www.facebook.com/disability.royalcommission.gov.au)



Twitter

[@DRC\\_AU](https://twitter.com/DRC_AU)



You can also subscribe to our newsletter

*Connect* by sending an email to:

[DRCmailinglist@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:DRCmailinglist@royalcommission.gov.au)

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