

# Legal help to engage with the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

Do you want to tell your story to the Disability Royal Commission?

Do you need to talk to a lawyer?

Read this factsheet to find out what you can do.

## What is the Disability Royal Commission?

The Disability Royal Commission has been asked by the government to look into violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability. This means there will be an opportunity for people to share their stories and ideas.

A final report will be written by 29 April 2022. This report will make recommendations to the government.

If you would like more information about the Disability Royal Commission, visit the website: [www.disability.royalcommission.gov.au](http://www.disability.royalcommission.gov.au)

## What if I want to tell my story?

You can tell the Disability Royal Commission about your experiences. You can also share your ideas about making our society more inclusive.

## How do I tell my story?

You can choose to tell your story in 4 ways:

### 1. Make a submission

This means you write or record your story and send it to the Disability Royal Commission.

### 2. Register to speak at a community forum

This means you ask to tell your story at a public meeting organised by the Disability Royal Commission. The Disability Royal Commission will tell you if you can speak at the forum. You will also need to tell your story in a submission.

### 3. Ask for a private hearing

This means you ask to tell your story in person to one or more Commissioners. The Disability Royal Commission cannot promise that everyone who asks for a private session will get one. It depends on how many people want private sessions.

Call 1800 771 800 or visit [www.drclegalservice.org.au](http://www.drclegalservice.org.au)

A joint initiative of:

#### 4. Ask to be a witness in a public hearing

This means you ask to tell your story in person to the Disability Royal Commission and others in a public hearing. You may be asked questions about your story. The Disability Royal Commission needs to invite you to be a witness. Not everyone who asks to be a witness may be invited by the Commission.

If you need help to tell your story, a friend, family member, carer or disability advocate can help you.

Contact the Disability Royal Commission to tell your story. **Call 1800 517 199 from 9am to 6pm** (eastern daylight savings time) for more information or to make a submission over the phone.

#### What will happen to my story?

You can tell the Disability Royal Commission that you want your story to be public.

You can also ask for your story to be kept private (if you make a submission or have a private session).

If the Disability Royal Commission asks you to share your story in public, call the Disability Royal Commission Legal Service for legal help on **1800 771 800**. We can give you specific advice.

The Royal Commission will think about your story when writing their report to the government.

#### Do I need to speak to a lawyer?

A lawyer can help you decide the best way to tell your story to the Disability Royal Commission. Talking to a lawyer does not mean you are in trouble. You can get help to protect your rights and share your story. Not everyone will need to talk to a lawyer before telling their story.

The Disability Royal Commission Legal Service is free, independent and separate from the Royal Commission. We will not pass your information to the Commission unless you agree.

The Disability Royal Commission Legal Service is provided by:

- lawyers from Legal Aid Commissions
- lawyers from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services.

#### How do I contact the Disability Royal Commission Legal Service?

**You can call us on 1800 771 800 between 9.15am and 5.15pm** (eastern daylight savings time), Monday to Friday.

#### You can ask for help about:

- using the name of an organisation or person in your story
- how to keep your story private
- what to do if you have a confidentiality or non-disclosure agreement that stops you from telling your story
- what to do if you are concerned about payback if you tell your story
- what to do if you are worried about telling your story because you or someone else, will be unsafe, lose access to services or employment or your rights will be affected