

# YOUR STORY

DISABILITY LEGAL SUPPORT

Free, independent legal support to share  
your story with the Disability Royal Commission

# Ideas for preparing your submission

A joint initiative of:





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## How to use this guide

One way to share your story with the Disability Royal Commission is by making a submission. A submission is a record of your story.

This resource gives you some ideas and information about how to prepare your submission.

It is intended as general guidance. It should not be relied on as legal advice and we recommended that you talk to a lawyer about your situation.

## Contact Your Story Disability Legal Support for legal help

You need to decide if making a submission is a safe way for you to share your story with the Disability Royal Commission. Your Story Disability Legal Support can provide you legal advice to inform your decision.

**Call us on 1800 77 1800** (free call) or contact us at our website:

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

If you are deaf, hard of hearing and/or have a speech impairment, you can contact us using the National Relay Service **<https://nrschat.nrs.gov.au/nrs/internetrelay>**.

If you need an interpreter, you can call us and ask for an interpreter or call the free Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask for Your Story Disability Legal Support on **1800 77 1800**.

## Who can make a submission?

Anybody can make a submission. The Disability Royal Commission wants to hear about experiences of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability in all settings and contexts.

This includes, but is not limited to, community and residential settings, mental health facilities, hospitals, prisons, schools, out-of-home care, transport, aged care facilities, family homes and services.

## How do I make a submission?

There are four ways you can make a submission to the Disability Royal Commission.

1. Online:  
<https://shareyourstorysubmission.disabilityroyalcommission.gov.au/>
2. By phone: 1800 517 199 (9.00am to 5.00pm AEST Monday to Friday excluding national public holidays)
3. By email: [DRCenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:DRCenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au)
4. By post: GPO Box 1422, Brisbane QLD 4001

Your submission can be in any language or format. It can be:

- in writing
- an image
- an artwork
- an audio clip
- a video clip.

You can attach an image, artwork, audio clip or video clip to the online form or send it by email or post.

The Disability Royal Commission has different PDF submission forms available for download at the following link: <https://disabilityroyalcommission.gov.au/publications/make-your-submission-forms>.

You do not have to use these forms if you do not want to, but they can be helpful in providing guidance around what to include.

There is currently no end date for submissions.

## What can submissions be about?

The Terms of Reference for the Disability Royal Commission set out the type of things they want to hear about. The Terms of Reference cover what should be done to:

- prevent and better protect people with disability from being hurt, treated badly, refused help or taken advantage of
- achieve best practice in reporting, investigating and responding to cases where people with disability have been or are being hurt, treated badly, refused help or taken advantage of
- promote a more inclusive society that supports the independence of people with disability and their right to live free from being hurt, treated badly, refused help or taken advantage of.

## 6 steps to prepare a submission

**1. Think about your story: what do you want to share?**

**2. Are you worried about sharing any of your story? Contact Your Story Disability Legal Support for legal advice**

**3. Share your story**

**4. Include attachments**

**5. Be clear about your confidentiality**

**6. Submit or send your story to the Disability Royal Commission**

### **Step 1. Think about what you want in your submission**

Every story is important — the Disability Royal Commission needs to hear from people about their personal experiences of being hurt, treated badly, refused help or taken advantage of because of disability.

Before you start preparing your submission, take some time to think about your ideas.

## What do you want to share with the Disability Royal Commission?

Think about your most important message to the Disability Royal Commission. What is the most important message you want the Disability Royal Commission to take away? Some ideas of what you may choose to include in your submission include:

- your experience of being hurt, treated badly, refused help or taken advantage of because of disability
- your knowledge of people with disability who have been or are being hurt, treated badly, refused help or taken advantage of because of disability
- if you have shared your experiences with someone in the past, what happened
- any ideas or examples of how things could be done better, or what already works well
- your hopes for the future.

Examples of other questions you may choose to answer in your submission are at Appendix 1.

The Disability Royal Commission will look at many topics. These include:

- education
- housing and accommodation
- health
- justice: police/courts

- economic participation
- rights, awareness and community attitudes. There are Issues Papers published about these topics that include questions that might give you ideas for your submission. These can be found at <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/policy-and-research/issues-papers>

## Step 2. Get legal support if you are worried about sharing any of your story

After you've decided what you want to share with the Disability Royal Commission, think about whether you are worried about sharing any of your story.

Some reasons you might be worried are:

- you want to use the name of an organisation or person in your story
- you have a confidentiality or non-disclosure agreement that stops you sharing some or all of your story
- you are concerned about payback if you share your story
- you are worried that you or someone else will be unsafe, lose access to services or employment, or your rights will be affected
- your story talks about current or past court matters
- your story talks about something you did, that you should not have done or think may be illegal.

If you are worried about sharing any of your story (from Step 1) with the Disability Royal Commission, call Your Story Disability Legal Support on 1800 77 1800.

## Step 3. Share your story

### 3.1 Share your story in the way you want

You can choose how you want to share your story.

You may want to prepare one submission, or several different submissions on different topics.

Your submission can be in any format. It can be:

- in writing
- an image
- an artwork
- an audio clip
- a video clip.

You can prepare a submission in any language you want. The Royal Commission will accept submissions in the same language that you would use with a friend.

### 3.2 Structure your story to make it easy to follow

You can choose how you structure your story. For example:

- use topics such as Education, Health, Justice, Service Providers or
- set out your story in the order the events happened.

You might want to use headings. This can be an easy way to structure the information you have thought about. The headings you use may depend on how you choose to structure your story.

- you can choose headings that are the topics you want to talk about like education, health
- or you can choose more general headings like: introduction to me, what happened, what I did, the response, what worked, what didn't work, what needs to change, what I think the Disability Royal Commission needs to do.

## **If you are writing your submission**

You might want to:

- start each new thought in a new paragraph or dot point
- number each paragraph or dot point so it's easier for the Disability Royal Commission to read
- use page numbers
- include the date you finished your submission.

You may want to use the Disability Royal Commission's submission form. You can find it at:

**<https://disabilityroyalcommission.gov.au/publications/make-your-submission-forms>**

## Step 4. Include attachments

You can attach documents or files to your submission if you want to.

When attaching things:

- include a brief description of what you are attaching in the content of your submission
- include things related to your story like a letter you wrote to a service provider, or a photo of the school you attended that did not have any ramps.

You don't need to attach documents if you don't want to, or if you don't have them.

If you have questions about the things you want to attach, call us on 1800 77 1800 for legal advice.

Your Story Disability Legal Support is free, independent and separate from the Disability Royal Commission. We will not pass your information to the Disability Royal Commission unless you agree. We also won't tell anybody what you tell us, unless you want us to.

## Step 5. Be clear about how you want the Royal Commission to use your submission

You can give the Disability Royal Commission permission to:

- publish all your submission, including your name, on the Disability Royal Commission website
- publish your submission on the website, but without your name
- only publish certain parts of your submission on the Disability Royal Commission website or in its documents and reports.

You can also ask the Disability Royal Commission not to publish your submission in any way.

If you are using the online form or the PDF submission form, tick the circle on pages 4–5 with your choice.

If you are using your own document or sending a submission in another format, tell the Disability Royal Commission how you want them to use your submission when you send it in.

### **More questions about how the Disability Royal Commission can use your information?**

**Call us on 1800 77 1800 for legal advice**

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## Step 6. Submit or send your story to the Disability Royal Commission

- If you complete your submission online, you will submit it online. When you get to the end of the form, you will find a button that says 'Submit'.
- You can email your submission to the Disability Royal Commission at [DRCenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au](mailto:DRCenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au).
- You can post your submission to GPO Box 1422, Brisbane QLD 4001.

**Disclaimer:** This information is intended as a general guide. It should not be relied on as legal advice and we recommended that you talk to a lawyer about your particular situation.

# Appendix 1 — Some questions you can choose to answer in your submission

## What happened?

- What would you like to tell the Royal Commission about your experience of (or knowledge of people with disability) having been or being hurt, treated badly, refused help or taken advantage of?
- Are you telling the Royal Commission your own knowledge or experience or someone else's? If it is someone else, who is that person and what is your relationship to them?
- When, or around when, were you (or the person you are telling the Royal Commission about) hurt, treated badly, refused help or taken advantage of? (If you can, provide a date, or range of dates.)
- Have any of your family, carers, workers or others helped or supported you with what happened?

## Reporting what happened

- Have you told anyone about your experience?
- Who did you tell?
- What did you tell them?
- When did you tell them?
- Did you put it in writing? If yes, can you provide the Royal Commission with a copy?
- Was it difficult to report your experience?  
Can you explain why or why not?

## The response after reporting

- If you reported your experience, what happened in response?
- Did the person or organisation you reported your experience to do anything about it?
- What else did they do about it?
- Was there any investigation of what happened to you? If so, who investigated?
- Were you offered any support? If yes, did you accept the support? Why or why not?
- Have you ever received any payment, apology, offer to fix your issue, or any other result? Would you consider the response to reporting good or bad? Can you please explain why?

## Recommendations for change

- Are there any suggestions you would like to share, including any examples of what worked well or ideas for how things could be done better? You might also like to tell the Royal Commission about any people who have supported you.

## Anything else?

- Is there anything else you would like to share with the Royal Commission?
- In a few sentences, what would you like to tell Australia about your hopes for the future?



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Call 1800 77 1800 or visit  
[www.yourstorydisabilitylegal.org.au](http://www.yourstorydisabilitylegal.org.au)

A joint initiative of:

  
National Legal Aid

  
NATSILS  
NATIONAL ABORIGINAL & TORRES  
STRAIT ISLANDER LEGAL SERVICES