



Free legal help to navigate
the Royal Commission

media release

Tuesday 18th March, 2014

Ballarat survivors assisted to provide their stories to the Royal Commission

knowmore legal advisory service will be in Ballarat to coincide with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse visit this week to assist survivors and link up with support services.

knowmore Senior Lawyer Laura McDonough said that while many survivors may have provided evidence to the recent Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry, the national Royal Commission was another opportunity to have their story heard.

“We recognise that there is sometimes a healing process from having your experiences put on the record, and there are a number of ways to tell your story if you feel ready to,” Ms McDonough said.

“People who have experienced traumatising sexual abuse as a child whilst under the care of an institution may have legal concerns or questions about the Royal Commission and the engagement process.

“The terms of reference of the Royal Commission are different to those set out in the Victorian inquiry. Firstly, the Royal Commission will be broader than the Victorian inquiry in that it will look at any institution, government or non-government – it is not limited to religious or non-government agencies.

“Secondly the Royal Commission is set up to look at sexual abuse as opposed to the criminal abuse of children.

“Importantly, if people wish to have legal advice or representation as part of their engagement with the Royal Commission, they can access this through **knowmore**.

“Our team will be in Ballarat from Tuesday 18th of March, ahead of the Royal Commission’s visit on Thursday and Friday 20th and 21st of March in case anyone wishes to consult about their legal rights or to get help in preparing written statements or submissions,” Ms McDonough said.

If anyone would like to get in touch to make a time to talk to **knowmore** whilst we are in Ballarat, please call the 1800 605 762 number to arrange it.



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Fast facts:

The Victorian Inquiry	The Royal Commission
Looked at criminal abuse of children	Limited to sexual abuse and related matters (physical assaults can be included if related to the sexual abuse)
Looked at religious and non-government agencies only	ANY institution, government or non-government
Any publically available submissions or transcripts from the Vic inquiry cannot be used as evidence by the Royal Commission, however people who gave evidence at the Victorian inquiry can provide a copy/transcript of their hearing, including anything additional that may be relevant to the Royal Commission	People would need to attend a hearing of the Royal Commission and tell their story again before it can be used as evidence by the Royal Commission
Witnesses at hearings of the Vic inquiry were not entitled to legal representation	Witnesses of the Royal Commission are entitled to legal representation

For more information, please call Senior Lawyer Laura McDonough on 0427 926 977.