

# Finding a Lawyer

## What you should know

**know  
more**

Free legal help to navigate  
the Royal Commission

Free advice line 1800 605 762 | Website [knowmore.org.au](http://knowmore.org.au)

**Talking to the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse and related services might bring up some other legal issues for you. For example, if you are wanting compensation or to start legal action, you may need specialised legal advice. You will need a lawyer experienced in running personal injury cases involving institutional abuse and someone who is experienced in working with people who have suffered trauma. If you need more help with finding a lawyer, then contact knowmore.**

### Start with your State or Territory Law Society

Each State and Territory has their own Law Society and you should start there. The Law Societies will be able to give you names of lawyers who are experienced in this type of work – you should look around for a lawyer who will be right for you.

You should contact the Law Society in the State or Territory where the abuse took place. The contact details are below:

NSW Law Society – (02) 9926 0300
Victorian Law Institute – (03) 9607 9311
Queensland Law Society – 1300 367 757
WA Law Society – (08) 9324 8600
ACT Law Society – (02) 6247 5700
Tasmanian Law Society – (03) 6234 4133
NT Law Society – (08) 8981 5104
SA Law Society - (08) 8229 0222

### How much will a lawyer cost me?

The first thing to know is that lawyers' fees are made up of two parts:

**Professional Costs** – money paid to the lawyer for the work they have done for you and

**Fees/Outlays/Disbursements** – money the lawyer has to pay for you, like witness expenses, filing fees, service fees, report costs and photocopying.

The second thing to know is that many firms doing this type of work advertise they will work for you on a 'no win, no fee' basis.

### What does this mean?

Generally, it means:

- you only pay your lawyer if you win and
- if you lose, that you don't have to pay any fees to your lawyer.

**BUT** if you lose, you may still have to pay: the legal costs of the other side's lawyers and your lawyer's fees, outlays or disbursements, though not their professional costs, if that is what you agreed at the start.

**ALWAYS** check what the lawyer means when they talk about 'no win, no fee'.

Your lawyer should give you a client agreement. Take your client agreement away to read carefully and get independent legal advice on what the agreement means before you sign it.

### First appointment free – How do I get the maximum benefit from this appointment?

Some lawyers offer their first appointment (often 30 to 60 minutes) free. You want to make sure you get the maximum benefit from this free appointment.

- To prepare for this appointment, it is a good idea to write down, or ask someone to help you write down, the following to take with you:
- your full name and any other name you might have been known by
- your address and telephone number

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- the telephone number for a contact person, should the lawyer not be able to reach you
- your email address, if you have one
- your date of birth
- the dates you were involved with an institution whether that was a school, foster home, football club etc and the name of that institution
- a brief summary of the abuse you experienced and, if you can remember, the name of the person who abused you
- a brief summary of how this abuse has affected you – for example, the effects on your schooling, job opportunities, relationships, health etc
- whether you have tried to get compensation before for this abuse.

### Contact knowmore

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

Email [info@knowmore.org.au](mailto:info@knowmore.org.au)

[@knowmorecomms](https://www.facebook.com/knowmorecomms)

It is important that you don't write too much – one to three pages maximum.

This will help you because you don't want to spend the whole appointment talking to the lawyer about what has happened. You want to hear what the lawyer has to say.

You want the lawyer to be able to read the document during your interview and ask you relevant questions. The lawyer will use your document and what you say to provide you with advice.

#### Brisbane

Suite 1, Level 16, 141 Queen St,  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
PO Box 2151, Brisbane QLD 4001  
t 07 3218 4500

#### Sydney

Suite G02, Ground Floor,  
233 Castlereagh St, Sydney NSW 2000  
PO Box 20319, World Square NSW 2002  
t 02 8267 7400

#### Melbourne

Level 1, 180 Flinders St,  
Melbourne 3000  
PO Box 84, Flinders Lane VIC 8009  
t 03 8663 7400

#### Perth

Level 9, 41 St Georges Terrace,  
Perth WA 6000  
PO Box 8095, Cloisters Square, WA 6850  
t 08 9225 0200

**knowmore** has been established by the National Association of Community Legal Centres Inc. with funding from the Australian Government represented by the Attorney-General's Department.

The information provided in this factsheet is for information only. It must not be relied on as legal advice. You should seek legal advice about your own particular circumstances. | Last updated: July 2014 © **knowmore**