The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Engaging with the Royal Commission

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Free legal help to navigate the Royal Commission

Free advice line 1800 605 762 | Website knowmore.org.au

There are different ways you can talk to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and assist its investigations. For example, you might be able be able to:

- **give an oral or written statement**
- **attend a private session with a Commissioner**
- **give evidence before a public or private hearing**
- **make a submission in response to an Issues Paper**

If you are unsure what to do or if you want more information or help, you can contact knowmore.

What is the Royal Commission about?

The Royal Commission is looking into Australian institutions: how child sexual abuse happened 'on their watch' and whether they responded the best they could.

What will the Royal Commission do?

The Royal Commission will hear from people who experienced child sexual abuse in institutions and will call witnesses, like organisations and survivors, to give evidence in public hearings. If you want to know more, you can read **knowmore**'s factsheet About the Royal Commission.

How do I let the Royal Commission know I want to tell my story?

You can register your interest with the Royal Commission. You can do this by:

Phone	1800 099 340
Post	GPO Box 5283 Sydney NSW 2001
By email	contact@childabuse royalcommission.gov.au.

How will the Royal Commission hear my story?

There are a number of ways you can tell your story to the Royal Commission.

You could make a written or oral statement, speak to a Commissioner in a private session or give evidence at a private or public hearing.

Written statements

You can write down or type what you want to tell the Royal Commission and then send it to them. You don't have to put your name on a statement, but you should say in your statement that you don't want to give your name.

You can get some help with writing statements. The Royal Commission has guidelines on its website at www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au and **knowmore** has a factsheet called *Writing Statements – How do I prepare a statement to give to the Royal Commission?*

You can also contact **knowmore** for further help.

Private sessions

In a private session, you will tell your story to one or two Commissioners. There is no-one there from the institution you are talking about. The Commissioners may ask you some questions. You cannot have a lawyer

represent you but you can have a support person present with you.

The information you give in a private session is not evidence before the Royal Commission and cannot be used in other civil or criminal proceedings. The information you provide to the Royal Commission will be kept confidential unless you agree to it being made public. The exception to this is where there is a risk of harm to someone.

The Royal Commission may ask you to tell your story again at a hearing. But the Royal Commission will not force you to do this if you don't want to.

Hearings

If you give evidence at a hearing, you will be asked to take an oath or make an affirmation that what you say is the truth. You may be asked questions from other people or organisations or their lawyers.

The evidence you give can be specifically used by the Royal Commission in its report and recommendations.

You can't refuse to answer a question because the answer may be an admission that you have done something wrong, but the evidence you give cannot generally be used against you in other civil or criminal proceedings.

If you are appearing at a hearing you may want to obtain a lawyer to represent you. There is financial assistance available to assist with witness expenses and legal fees for representation at a hearing. You can contact **knowmore** for information about this.

Issues Papers

You might also be able to contribute to the Royal Commission's work by making submissions upon specific issues that it is looking into. These issues are usually presented to the public in what are called 'Issues Papers'.

An Issues Paper will take a specific issue and ask for public submissions on particular things relevant to that issue.
The Royal Commission's website lists its current Issues Papers and when submissions are due.

The Royal Commission's website is: www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au.

Can I get into trouble for telling my story?

If you are concerned about the Royal Commission passing on your information to law enforcement agencies or concerned about getting into trouble for talking to the Royal Commission, then you should get some legal advice about what to do.

You can contact **knowmore** for legal help.

More information

You can contact **knowmore** for more information about how the Royal Commission can use your story; financial assistance for a lawyer to represent you at an interview or hearing; compensation options; and support services to help you.

Contact knowmore

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