

Review of the National Redress Scheme: Tips for making a submission

As part of the independent second anniversary review of the National Redress Scheme (NRS), everyone is encouraged to have their say on how the Scheme is working.

knowmore has created this guide for people who want to make a submission to the review. A submission is like a statement where you talk about your experiences with the NRS.

Is making a submission right for you?

Before you get started, check that making a submission is the best way for you to have your say about the NRS. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Do I know what I want to say?
2. Do I want to talk about my experiences with the NRS in my own way?
3. Do I have enough time to make my submission before Wednesday September 30, 2020?

If you said no to any of these you might find it easier to complete a survey. You can read more about this at www.knowmore.org.au.

How to make your submission

There are two main ways to make your submission:

1. **In writing.** This involves writing about your experiences with the NRS much like you would write a letter. You can write as much or as little as you want.

2. **Over the phone.** This involves talking about your experiences with the NRS in a 15 to 20 minute phone conversation with someone from the Review Team.

If you are writing your submission our tips for you start on page 3. If you are making your submission over the phone our tips for you start on page 4.

If you can't make a submission in writing or over the phone you can make an audio or video recording instead. Our written submission tips outline the general process to follow if you choose this option.

What if I need help?

If you have questions about the review, or require interpreting services, you can contact the review team at redressreview@dss.gov.au or find out more at www.nationalredress.gov.au/about/second-anniversary-review. You can also contact knowmore on 1800 605 762 or at advocacy@knowmore.org.au.

If you need support, reach out to someone you trust, call one of the free numbers below, or contact one of the other support services listed on knowmore's website: knowmore.org.au/resources/external-support/.

- 1800 RESPECT — 1800 737 732 (open 24 hours, every day)
- Blue Knot Foundation — 1300 657 380 (open 9am to 5pm, every day)

What you should include

It's up to you what you include in your submission but below you'll find some examples to help you get started.

If you haven't made an NRS application, you might like to talk about:

Why you haven't applied

- Are you still waiting for your institution to join the NRS?
- Have particular things stopped you completing your application?

Whether you will apply in the future

- If you think you will, is there any support you need?

If you have made an NRS application, you might like to talk about:

Your institution

- If your institution hasn't joined the NRS, do you know if it plans to? What will it mean for you if your institution doesn't join the NRS?

Applying for redress

- How did you find the application process?
- Did you find it difficult to complete your application? Were you able to get support?

Communicating with the NRS

- How easy or difficult was communicating with the NRS and getting information about your application?
- Do you have any special communication needs? Has the NRS met these?

Your personal information

- Do you believe your personal information is protected by the NRS?

How long the NRS takes

- If you are still waiting for a decision, how long has it been since you submitted your

application? If there has been any delay, have you been told why?

- If you have received an offer, how long did it take for the NRS to make a decision? If there was any delay, were you told why?

Suggested changes

- What changes do you think should be made to the NRS? Why are these important?

If you have received an offer from the NRS, you might also like to talk about:

Your offer

- Were you happy with the offer?
- Were you offered less because of a prior payment? What did you think about this?
- Did you accept or reject the offer and if so why?
- Did you ask the NRS to review or revoke the offer and if so why?

Counselling services

- Did you ask for counselling? Have you got the support you need?

Direct personal responses (apologies)

- Did you ask for a direct personal response (an apology) from your institution? Have you received it yet? What was this like?

Taking care of yourself

You don't have to discuss the abuse you experienced as a child in your submission, but talking about your experiences with the NRS may trigger strong feelings. To help you cope we suggest you:

- If possible, arrange for someone you trust to support you while you work on or make your submission. If you'd prefer to do your submission in private, you could arrange to debrief with a trusted friend or support person afterwards.
- Plan to do something enjoyable or relaxing after working on or making your submission. Maybe you could go for a walk, call a friend, have a warm bath or listen to some of your favourite music.

There are some other great tips for looking after yourself on the Blue Knot website:

www.blueknot.org.au/For-Survivors/Survivor-self-care.

Written submissions

4 steps to making your written submission:

1. *Get ready to write your submission*
2. *Write your submission*
3. *Check your submission*
4. *Send your submission in by Wednesday September 30, 2020*

1. Get ready to write your submission

Set aside certain times to write your submission and take your time. Think about when you are usually at your best and plan to work on your submission then.

Think about what you would like to say in your submission (see "What you should include" on page 2). You might like to make some notes to help you get started.

Decide how you will write your submission. You can type it or write it by hand. You can also use a form on the review's website:

www.nationalredress.gov.au/review-form.

If you want to use this form, we suggest typing your submission in a Word document first.

2. Write your submission

Take your time. Be kind to yourself. If you become overwhelmed it's a good idea to take a break or do some exercises to help you feel calm and grounded. There are some good suggestions on the Blue Knot website: www.blueknot.org.au/Survivors/Self-care/grounding.

Make sure you cover your key points and write down everything you want to say. You might write about your experiences from beginning to end, or you might like to use the questions above to help organise your thoughts.

Make sure you say how you want your submission to be treated. You can:

- **Have it published with your name.** This means your submission will be put on the review's website and people will know you wrote it. To choose this option you can use these words: *I am comfortable with my submission being published with my full name.*
- **Have it published without your name.** This means your submission will be put on the review's website but people won't know you wrote it. To choose this option you can use these words: *I am comfortable with my submission being published, but I request that my name and any identifying details be removed before publication.*
- **Keep it private.** This means your

submission will only be read by the people doing the review (Ms Robyn Kruk and the National Redress Review Team). If you want to choose this option, you can use these words: *I request that my submission be kept confidential and not be published.*

It is very important that what you want is written clearly. The start of your submission is a good place to do this. Remember, you don't have to write your name in your submission if you don't want to.

Decide if there are any other documents you would like to send with your submission. An example might be a letter you received from the NRS that you mention in your submission. Photocopy or scan these documents so the copies are ready to send in later.

3. Check your submission

Once you've finished writing your submission, you might like to put it aside for a day or two before reading it again. When you read it again:

- Check you have said everything you wanted to say and are happy with how it sounds.
- Check you have said whether you want your submission to remain private or if you are happy for it to be published on the review's website (either with or without your name).

You might like to ask someone you trust to read your submission. This could include someone who has helped you with your NRS application. They can tell you if they've understood what you've written, which means the reviewer will be able to understand it too.

4. Send your submission in by Wednesday September 30, 2020

Send your submission to the review team by email, post or online.

- Email is best if you have typed your submission or have other electronic documents you would like to send.
redressreviewsubmissions@dss.gov.au
- Post is best if you have handwritten your submission or have other paper documents you would like to send.
National Redress Scheme Review
GPO Box 9820
CANEBRRA ACT 2601
- Online is best if you have typed your submission and don't have any other documents you would like to send.
www.nationalredress.gov.au/review-form

If you are sending other documents with your submission, remember to only send photocopies or scanned copies (not the originals).

Phone submissions

3 steps to making your submission over the phone

1. Get ready to make your submission
2. Contact the reviewer as soon as you're ready
3. Make your submission

1. Get ready to make your submission

Think about what you would like to say in your submission, remembering that you will have 15 to 20 minutes (see "What you should include" on page 2). You might like to make some notes to make sure you cover everything when you're on the phone. It may also help to practice what you want to say with someone you trust.

Decide what day and time you would like to make your submission. Make sure you will have enough time to talk without feeling rushed and will be able to take the call somewhere you won't be interrupted. If you'd like to have someone with you, check to see when they're available too.

What happens to what I say on the phone?

The person you speak to will take some notes. After the call, they will send these to you to check.

You can tell the person if you want what you say to be kept private, or if you're happy for it to be published on the review's website (either with or without your name).

2. Contact the reviewer as soon as you're ready

Send an email to redressreview@dss.gov saying that you would like to make your submission over the phone and asking to be called back at your preferred time. You might like to use the following words, putting your own details where the text is shaded blue.

Dear Ms Kruk

I am very interested in having my say on how the NRS is working. I would like to make a submission over the phone and would appreciate someone on the review team calling me at the following time:
Monday 17 August at 10am.

My best phone number is **(02) 1234 5678** or **1234 567 890.**

I would appreciate if you could please send me an email to confirm when I will receive the call, the name and role of the person I will be speaking to, and how much time I will have to share my views.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Your Name

If you don't have email, you might like to ask someone you trust to help you with this step.

Submissions can be made any time until Wednesday September 30, 2020, but we recommend sending your email by Monday August 31 to make sure you don't miss out on making your phone submission.

3. Make your submission

On the day of your call, try to get yourself ready 10 or 15 minutes early. Also:

- Make sure you're somewhere comfortable and private while you're on the phone.
- Have a glass of water and some tissues with you in case you need them.
- If you've made notes about the things you would like to say, have these with you.
- If you're feeling anxious, you might like to do some exercises to help you feel calm and grounded before you answer the phone. There are some good suggestions on the Blue Knot website: www.blueknot.org.au/Survivors/Self-care/grounding.

When you're on the phone, take your time and look after yourself. If you become

overwhelmed, focus on breathing evenly and see if this helps. Ask for a break if you need one. The person you're speaking to will be understanding. You might like to take some time to do one of the exercises on the Blue Knot website before continuing the call.

Make sure you cover your key points and get to say everything you want to say. Your experience is important and the person you're speaking to wants to hear about it. They might also ask some questions, but remember what you say is up to you. You don't have to talk about anything you don't want to.

If at any time you feel you can't finish the call, ask to be called back another time.

knowmore
free legal help for survivors

Brisbane

Level 20, 144 Edward Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
t 07 3218 4500

Melbourne

Level 15, 607 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
t 03 8663 7400

Sydney

Level 7, 26 College Street
Sydney NSW 2000
t 02 8267 7400

Perth

Level 5, 5 Mill Street
Perth WA 6000
t 08 6117 7244

knowmore Legal Service Limited | ABN 34 639 490 912 | ACN 639 490 912. knowmore is funded by the Commonwealth Government, represented by the Attorney-General's Department and the Department of Social Services, and receives additional funding from the Financial Counselling Foundation. Image inspired by original artwork by Dean Bell depicting knowmore's connection to the towns, cities, missions and settlements within Australia. knowmore acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands across Australia upon which we live and work. We pay our deep respects to Elders past, present and emerging.