

Joint Select Committee on the National Redress Scheme: Tips for making a submission

As part of its inquiry into the National Redress Scheme (NRS), the Joint Select Committee on Implementation of the NRS (the Committee) wants to hear about people's experiences with the Scheme.

knowmore has created this guide for people who want to tell the Committee about their experiences by making a written submission. A submission is like a statement where you talk about your experiences with the NRS and tell the Committee what you think needs to change.

How to make your submission

Making a submission 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.

We have some specific tips to help you write your submission starting on page 3.

If you can't make a submission in writing, 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 any questions about the Committee, or need help sharing your experiences (for example, you require interpreting services), you can contact the Committee Secretariat by phone or email, or find out more at

www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Redress_Scheme.

Phone: (02) 6277 4549 or (02) 6277 7799 if you are hearing or speech impaired (Parliament House TTY number)

Email: redress@aph.gov.au

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?

What not to include

It is important that you do not include any information in your submission about any ongoing legal proceedings (such as a court case).

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. Here are some suggestions to help you cope:

- If possible, arrange for someone you trust to support you while you work on your submission. If you'd prefer to work on 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 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.

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

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. It is best if you type it, but you can write it by hand if you prefer.

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: <https://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 with the NRS 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 choose to:

- **Have it published with your name.** This means your submission will be put on the Committee'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 Committee'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.' You should also say why you want to have your submission published without your name.
- **Keep it private.** This means your submission will only be read by members of the Committee and the Committee Secretariat (the people who help run the Committee). If you want to choose this option, you can use these words: 'I request that my submission be kept confidential and not be published.' You should also say why you want to keep your submission private.

It is very important that what you want is written clearly. The start of your submission is a good place to do this.

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

After 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 Committee's website (either with or without your name).

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

4. Send in your submission

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

Email is best if you have typed your submission or have other electronic documents you would like to send. It is a good idea to include the word 'submission' in the subject line of your email. Send your email to redress@aph.gov.au.

Post is best if you have written your submission by hand or you have other paper documents. Send your written application to:

Committee Secretariat

Joint Select Committee on Implementation
of the National Redress Scheme
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Online is best if you already have a My Parliament account through the Australian Parliament House website. You can read more about sending your submission online at www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/OnlineSubmission.

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

What happens after you've made your submission

The Committee will read your submission and consider what you have said as part of its examination of the NRS.

Normally, the Committee will also publish your submission on its website, if you have asked for this to happen. It is very important that you do not share your submission with anyone else until it is published on the Committee's website. You can contact the Committee Secretariat if you have any questions about this.

You can also contact the Committee Secretariat if you would like to withdraw or change your submission.

If you have new or additional information you would like to share with the Committee, you can make another submission (a 'supplementary submission').

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

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