



Royal Commission
into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation
of People with Disability

First Progress Report

An Easy Read summary

How to use this document



The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability wrote this document.

When you see the words 'we' or 'us', it means the Royal Commission.



We have written this information in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.



We have written some words in **bold**.

We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 27.



This Easy Read document is a summary of another document.



You can find the other document on [our website](#).



You can ask for help to read this document. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

What's in this document?

What is this document about?	4
A message from the Chair of the Royal Commission	5
Accessibility	7
Confidentiality	8
Engagement	9
Support	11
Public hearings	12
Workshops	16
Submissions	17
Issues papers	18
Community forums	19
Research	21
Offices and staff	22
Counsel Assisting	23
Conflicts of interest	24
Our work in 2020	25
Word list	27
Contact us	30

What is this document about?

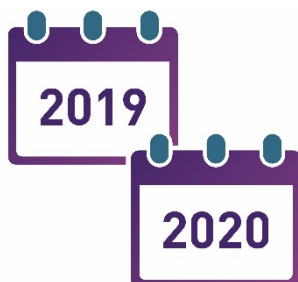


This document is called the First Progress Report.



It is about the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

We call it the Royal Commission.

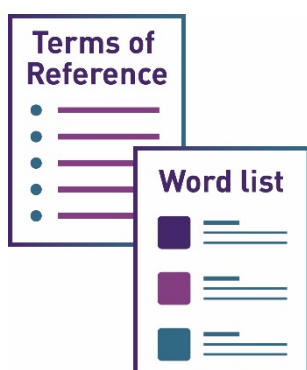


The First Progress Report explains the work we have done so far in 2019.

And it explains the work we will do in 2020.



You can find out more about the Royal Commission [on our website](#).



There you will find other Easy Read documents that explain:

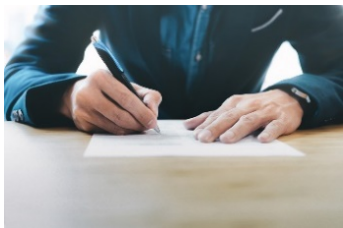
- the **Terms of Reference** – a list of things that the Royal Commission is looking into
- explanations of the main words we use.

A message from the Chair of the Royal Commission



The Honourable Mr Ronald Sackville AO QC is leading the Royal Commission.

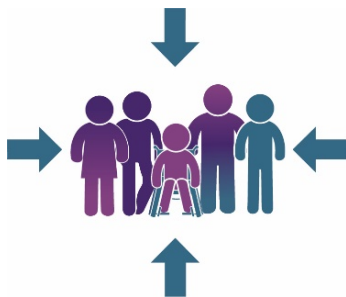
He is called the Chair of the Royal Commission.



Mr Sackville wrote an introduction to this report.



In the introduction, he says there has been a lot of important work done so far.



He says that the Royal Commission is making sure that people with disability are at the centre of that work.



He says it is important for people with disability to feel safe and supported when they share their experiences.



He also says that the Royal Commission came about because of the work that many people in the community have done in the past.



And he says that all of the work being done by the Royal Commission is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability.

This is an important document that is usually called the CRPD.



It explains how people with disability should be treated fairly.



It is used by countries all around the world.



Mr Sackville also says the Royal Commission will make changes in the community for people with disability.

Accessibility



The Royal Commission has finished its
‘Accessibility and inclusion strategy’.



We need the Royal Commission to be accessible
– everyone can use it.



Inclusion means we will make sure everyone can
take part. This includes:



- First Nations people



- people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning



- culturally and linguistically diverse people.

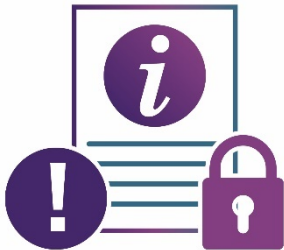


You can read the **‘Accessibility and inclusion strategy’ online.**

Confidentiality



Confidentiality is when someone promises not to share information.



The Royal Commission is serious about confidentiality.



The Royal Commission will not share any ideas or information about someone unless that person says it is ok.



Sometimes, the Royal Commission might share information about a person without using their name.

Engagement



Engagement is the way that we communicate and work with people outside of the Royal Commission.



We are writing a 'Community engagement strategy' at the moment.

This strategy will explain:



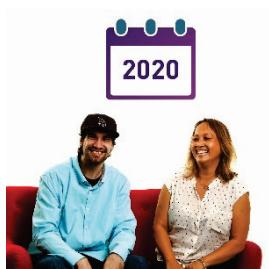
- the ways we will communicate with you



- how we will work with different groups in the community



- how we will ask for and use feedback



- the ways we will connect with the community in 2020.

We are also working on plans for engagement with:



- First Nations people



- culturally and linguistically diverse communities.



And we will have a new website early in 2020.

This website will:



- have more information



- be easier to use



- be fully accessible.

Support



We have set up support for people with disability to share their experiences with us.



Other government departments are helping us provide and pay for support.

People who engage with us can get free support including:



- 50 **advocacy** services – they help people with disability speak up
- 10 **counselling** services – they can help you with how you think and feel about the Royal Commission
- **legal services** – services that help you understand and use the law, including for First Nations people.



We have put more information about the support you can use [on our website](#).

Public hearings



So far, we have held 3 public hearings.



You can read about each of these [hearings in more detail on our website.](#)



You can also watch the videos of the hearings if you want to.

Brisbane



The first public hearing was in Brisbane.



It was on 16 September 2019.



It focused on:

- starting the Royal Commission
- explaining how people could tell their stories.

Townsville



The Townsville public hearing was held between 4–7 November 2019.



It focused on education for people with disability.

The people who spoke included:



- parents of children with disability
- people from advocacy and community organisations
- teachers, principals and other people who work in education.

During this public hearing, we learned that many people with disability are not getting an education that is:



- fair
- inclusive.

Melbourne



The Melbourne public hearing was between 2–6 December 2019.



It focused on housing for people with disability.



The people who spoke included:

- people with disability
- family members
- academics and experts
- people from the government
- advocates
- service providers.

We learned a lot about:



- the way that people with disability are living now and have lived in the past



- the problems that people with disability face, including in homes where people with disability live together



- the choices that people with disability want to make about:
 - where they live
 - who they live with
 - how they live.

Workshops



We have held 9 workshops across different parts of Australia.




Workshops are meetings where we talk about 1 important topic.

The following table explains each one.



You can read more about what we talked about at the workshops [on our website](#).

	Topic	Places	Dates
	Advocacy	Melbourne	18 June 2019
	Legal	Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne	1, 3 and 9 July 2019
	Service providers	Melbourne	18 July 2019
	First Nations people	Sydney and Darwin	6 and 15 August
	Justice	Melbourne	2 September 2019
	Education and learning	Melbourne	3 October 2019

Submissions



Submissions are the way that people tell us about their experiences.



We have set up different ways for people to give us their submissions, including:

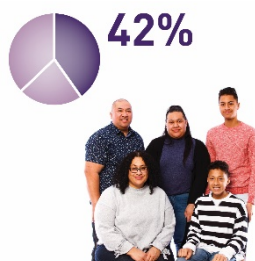
- using a form on our website
- on the phone
- by email.



So far, we've received 428 submissions.



33% of submissions were from people with disability.



42% were from family members.



We've also received 2001 phone enquiries so far.

Issues papers



Issues papers are documents that explain problems or ideas.






They also ask questions to start you thinking about what is happening.



So far, we have published 3 issues papers.



You can find each of them on our website.

	Topic of the issues paper	Date of publication
	Education and learning	30 October 2019
	Group homes	29 November 2019
	Health	16 December 2019

Community forums



Community forums allow people to talk to us and share their ideas.

6

So far, we have held 6 community forums.

Here is a summary of the forums we have done so far.

Location of forum	Date
Townsville	9 September 2019
Adelaide – 2 forums on the same day	12 November 2019
Gawler	14 November 2019
Hobart – 2 forums on the same day	26 November 2019

Many people have attended the forums, including:



- people with disability
- family members and carers
- advocates.

The forums have covered a wide range of topics, including:



- violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability



- **discrimination** – when someone isn't treated fairly



- **harassment** – when people are treated badly or are bullied



- barriers to education and health services



- problems with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Research



The Royal Commission wants to understand more about the way that people with disability are treated in Australia.

Research projects help us learn more about:



- how people with disability have been treated in the past
- the type of language we use to talk about people with disability
- First Nations people with disability
- the results of any reports or inquiries that were held in the past
- the laws that apply to people with disability.

Offices and staff



We now have accessible offices in Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra and Adelaide.



We have 7 Commissioners.



137

And we have 137 staff.



18

We have 18 staff who have disability.



8

And we have 8 staff who are First Nations people.

Counsel Assisting



Counsel Assisting are the lawyers who support the Commissioners.

The letters after their name mean:

- QC – Queens Counsel
- SC – Senior Counsel

The Counsel Assisting are:

- Rebecca Treston QC
- Kate Eastman SC
- Dr Kerri Mellifont QC
- Andrew Fraser
- Janice Crawford
- Ben Power
- Malcolm Harding

Conflicts of interest



Conflict of interest is when someone could affect a decision so that the result is better for them.



The Royal Commission has a policy about conflict of interest.



You can [read this policy on our website.](#)

Our work in 2020



We have a lot of work planned for 2020.



We will keep holding:

- public hearings
- community forums.



These will be held in different locations around Australia.



We will also hold **private sessions**.



These are meetings that are not held in public.



We had to ask for changes to the law so we could hold private sessions.



We will start holding private sessions in early 2020.



We will explain how to take part in private sessions on our website.



We will also publish more issues papers in 2020.

Word list



Accessible/accessibility

When something is accessible, everyone can use it. This might be:

- a place
- transport
- services
- information.



Advocacy

When someone speaks up for people with disability.



Confidentiality

When someone promises not to share information without permission.



Conflict of interest

When someone could affect a decision so that the result is better for them.



Counsel Assisting

The lawyers who support the Commission.



Counselling

Talking to someone about how you think and feel.



Discrimination

Being treated unfairly.



Engagement

The way that we communicate and work with the community.



Harassment

When people are treated badly or bullied.



Inclusion

Everyone can take part.



Legal services

Services that help you understand and use the law.



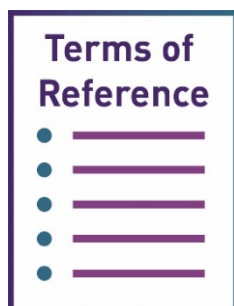
Private sessions

These are meetings that are not held in public.



Submission

A document that explains an experience or idea.



Terms of Reference

The list of things that the Royal Commission is looking into.



Workshops

Meetings where we talk about 1 important topic.

Contact us



You can call us on **1800 517 199**.



We are available on Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.



Or you can send an email to:

DRcenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au



For support in languages other than English, please call 131 450.

Please ask to be connected to the Disability Royal Commission on 1800 517 199.



[The Information Access Group](http://www.informationaccessgroup.com) created this Easy Read document using stock photography and custom images. The images may not be reused without permission. For any enquiries about the images, please visit www.informationaccessgroup.com. Quote job number 3400.