



Australian Government

FACT SHEET

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

On 5 April 2019, the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, and Minister for Families and Social Services, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, announced the establishment of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

Why set up a Royal Commission?

In Australia, royal commissions are the highest form of inquiry on matters of public importance.

Recent inquiries and reports have shown that people with disability are more likely to experience violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation than people without disability.

What we learn from the Royal Commission will help to inform Australian governments, institutions and the wider community on how to prevent, and better protect, people with disability from experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in the future.

Who was consulted on the draft Terms of Reference?

The Australian Government ran a public consultation on the draft Terms of Reference for a Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability from 13 to 28 March 2019.

The Government also consulted with disability peak bodies, advocates and with state and territory governments.

The Government received over 3,700 responses to the online survey on the draft Terms of Reference. Thirty per cent of respondents were people with disability.

The Terms of Reference for a Royal Commission define the scope of the Royal Commission's inquiry.

Ninety six per cent (96%) of respondents agreed the Terms of Reference should cover all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability, in all settings where they occur.

Ninety five per cent (95%) of people agreed the Terms of Reference should look at all aspects of the quality and safety of services for people with disability.

A full report on the consultation will be released in the coming weeks.

What is the scope of the Royal Commission?

The Commissioners have been directed to inquire into violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability.

The Royal Commission's Terms of Reference cover what should be done to:

- prevent, and better protect, people with disability from experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- achieve best practice in reporting and investigating of, and responding to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- promote a more inclusive society that supports the independence of people with disability and their right to live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The inquiry will cover all forms of violence against, and abuse, neglect and exploitation of, people with disability, in all settings and contexts.

What did people say about the draft Terms of Reference?

Overall, the responses were overwhelmingly supportive of the draft Terms of Reference, particularly about the broad scope of the inquiry.

The Government has strengthened the Terms of Reference based a number of themes expressed during the consultation process, including:

- ensuring people with disability are firmly at the centre of decision-making
- recognising the importance of people with disability sharing their stories
- acknowledging the multiple and diverse needs of people with disability including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability
- focusing on themes from individual experiences to identify systemic and recurring issues.

Who are the Royal Commissioners?

Six Royal Commissioners have been appointed to preside over the Royal Commission's inquiry.

The Hon Ronald Sackville AO QC is the Chair of the Royal Commission supported by five other Commissioners:

- Ms Barbara Bennett PSM
- Dr Rhonda Galbally AC
- Ms Andrea Mason OAM
- Mr Alastair McEwin
- The Hon John Ryan AM.

How much will the Royal Commission cost?

The Government committed \$527.9 million over five years for the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability in the 2019-20 Federal Budget. This includes funding to provide support for people to participate in the Royal Commission.

This funding includes the cost to establish and wrap-up the Royal Commission after the inquiry has finished and anticipates the Royal Commission will run for three years.

How will people with disability be supported?

The Australian Government sought feedback through the public consultation process on how to best support people with disability, their families, carers and advocates to participate in the Royal Commission.

In the 2019-20 Federal Budget, the Government allocated funding to enable the Royal Commission to provide accessible and appropriate arrangements for people with disability to engage with the inquiry.

The Royal Commission will advise about accessibility arrangements for people with disability in the coming months.

The Government will also provide individual advocacy supports and counselling support services for people engaging with the Royal Commission.

What are the next steps?

It takes time to establish a Royal Commission. The Royal Commission undertakes its inquiry independent of the Government. The newly appointed Commissioners will decide on the next steps, including when to hold hearings, how people can participate and how to ensure the inquiry is accessible for people with disability.

The Royal Commission will establish its own website in the coming weeks.

To keep updated, visit the following websites:

- dss.gov.au/DisabilityRoyalCommission
- ag.gov.au/DisabilityRoyalCommission

You can also contact the temporary hotline number on **1800 880 052** Monday to Friday from 9am to 7pm AEST.

If you are currently experiencing any form of violence or abuse, or are concerned for your safety, call 000 or contact Police.