

Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

Sharing your story

Information for inmates

SHARE YOUR STORY
IN CONFIDENCE

What is a Royal Commission?

A Royal Commission is an investigation into an important matter.

A Royal Commission was set up in January 2013 to investigate the way institutions have managed and responded to allegations and incidents of child sexual abuse. Six Commissioners were appointed to conduct the inquiry.

The Royal Commission will make recommendations on how to improve laws, policies and practices in Australia to better protect our children.

What will be investigated?

Commissioners can look at any institution in Australia that is, or was, involved with children. This includes schools, sporting clubs, children's services, orphanages, foster and residential care and religious organisations.

If you have any questions about what sort of institutions we are looking at, call us on number 24 on the wing phone.

Sharing your story

If you were sexually abused as a child when in the care of an institution, you can share your story with the Royal Commission. The Commissioners will listen to and read stories from people all around Australia to better understand what happened.

Your story will help the Commissioners build a picture about what happened to children in the past, and how to better protect children in the future.

People may want to share their stories for different reasons. For many people, having their voices heard can help them to heal.

How to share your story

Step 1: Look at the information pack

Your prison has Royal Commission information packs. If you don't receive one in your cell, you can ask for one from a correctional officer, teacher, welfare officer or any Services and Programs Office (SAPO).

The pack includes:

- A copy of this booklet
- A prepaid, tamper-proof envelope
- A factsheet about services that can support you

You can also call us on number 24 to ask questions or ask for an information pack.

If you want legal advice before contacting us, please contact knowmore on number 25. knowmore is a free legal service set up to help people who want to talk to the Royal Commission.

Step 2: Let us know that you are interested in sharing your story

Once you have read through the information pack, let us know that you are interested in sharing your story. You can write to us using the free envelope provided or call us on number 24.

If you write to us, we need you to provide the following information if you can:

- Your name
- Your MIN
- Your date of birth (DOB)

We will contact you confidentially to discuss the matter further.

If you need help preparing this information, you should speak with another prisoner, or anyone you feel you can trust. If you don't want to ask for help from anybody at the prison, you can make a free call to one of the following organisations:

- The Royal Commission on number 24
- knowmore on number 25 (free legal advice)
- Interrelate on number 26
- Relationships Australia on number 27
- Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited on number 12

Whatever you say to these organisations will be completely confidential. If you call one of these numbers your call will be limited to 10 minutes. You can use that time to either book a longer call or, in some cases, a face-to-face visit.

Calling us

To make a free phone call on a wing phone, enter your **MIN** number, followed by your **PIN** number. Then choose option **2**, then dial one of the two digit numbers listed on the opposite page.

For example, to call the Royal Commission pick up the receiver, enter your MIN and PIN as you normally would, then select option 2, then press 24 and your call will go straight through. These calls will not be charged to your account.

Writing to us

If you choose to asky any questions, or register by writing to us, please send it to us in the pre-paid envelope included in the information pack. It is important that you use this envelope because it won't be opened or read by anyone except staff from the Royal Commission. We have an agreement with your correctional centre that no mail to or from the Royal Commission will be opened or read by anyone at your correctional centre. We take your privacy seriously.

You must SEAL the envelope before putting it in the post box or giving it to staff.

Step 3: share your story

After we have received your information, we will write or call back to you to let you know the options available to share your story.

If you ask us to call you, we will make an arrangement with your correctional centre to have private call with you. That phone call will be treated as a legal call.

Step 4: Private session option

You may be able to share your story face-to-face with a Commissioner in a private session. Private sessions take about an hour.

If it is not possible to have a private session, or you do not want one, you can write down your story and send it to us. More information about how to send us a written statement will be included in our letter to you or you can follow the instructions above at the 'writing to us' section.

What else does the Royal Commission do?

Public and Private Hearings

As well as private sessions where people share their stories, the Royal Commission also holds public hearings. Hearings are formal proceedings overseen by the Commissioners. Witnesses are called to give evidence and may be asked to answer questions or provide documents, like in a court of law. Public hearings are open to the public and the media.

Research

The Royal Commission is also conducting research to support its work.

Issues Papers and Submissions

The Royal Commission releases issues papers on different topics to give organisations and individuals an opportunity to provide their ideas to us in writing. Written responses to issues papers are called submissions.

Help and counselling services

We have made an agreement with two counselling services who will provide support to prisoners who want to talk to the Royal Commission, these are:

- Interrelate
- Relationships Australia NSW (Wattle Place).

Legal advice

A free, independent service called knowmore can provide legal advice to people dealing with the Royal Commission. If you believe you need assistance, knowmore can help with:

- legal information and advice about your options for talking to the Royal Commission
- advice on related legal issues including confidentiality agreements and compensation
- writing statements and submissions

knowmore does not provide legal representation for people appearing before the Royal Commission. However, knowmore can help you to find suitable representation and to access funding for it. You can call knowmore's national advice line by dialling number 25 on the correctional centre phone.

Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited can provide support and information for any inmate affected by the work of the Royal Commission. You can speak directly to an Aboriginal support worker at Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Limited by dialling number 12 on the correctional centre phone.

Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse