



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

## **About the Terms of Reference**

**Easy Read version**



## How to use this document

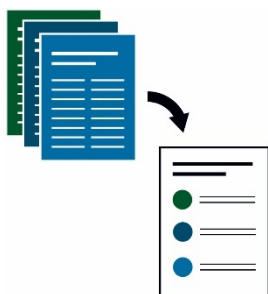


The Australian Government wrote this document. When you see the word 'we', it means Australian Government.



We have written this information in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.



This Easy Read document is a summary of another document.



You can find the other document on either of these websites:

[www.dss.gov.au/DisabilityRoyalCommission](http://www.dss.gov.au/DisabilityRoyalCommission)

[www.ag.gov.au/About/RoyalCommissions](http://www.ag.gov.au/About/RoyalCommissions)



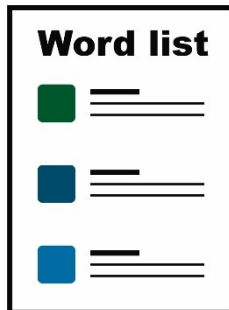
You can ask for help to read this document. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

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## Terms we use

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



We explain those words in the text.

There is a word list on page 28.



When we talk about people with disability,  
we mean all people with disability.



This might include someone who has  
a disability from birth.



Or it might mean someone who has a disability  
because of an accident or getting older.

It includes people with:



- physical disability – disability that affects your body and the way it moves or works



- sensory disability – disability that affects one or more of your senses, such as sight or hearing



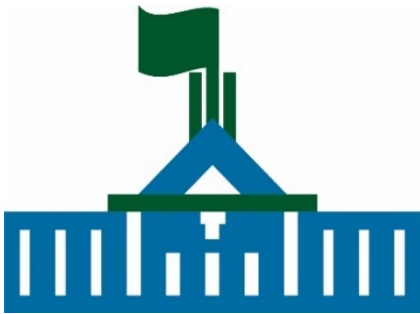
- intellectual disability – disability that affects the way you think



- psycho-social disability – disability that affects your mental health.



We also use the word 'government'.



This may mean the Australian Government.



Or it may mean the governments of the states or territories.



Or it may mean local governments, such as the council in your area.

# What is a Royal Commission?



A Royal Commission is an official way of looking into a big problem.



It helps us to work out what went wrong and what we need to fix.



It is usually led by 1 or more senior people.  
The Chair of the Royal Commission is a judge.  
These people are called the **Commissioners**.



The Commissioners are not part of the government. They are **independent** – the government will not tell them what to do.



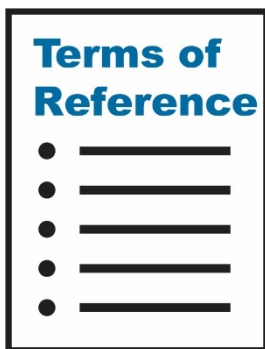
They look into a problem or issue.



After they have looked at the problem closely, they make suggestions about how it can be fixed.



As a Royal Commission is being set up, the government writes a list of things that the Commissioners should look at.



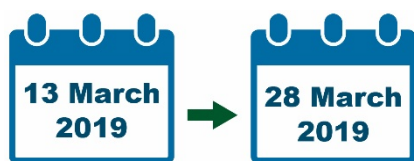
This is called the Terms of Reference.



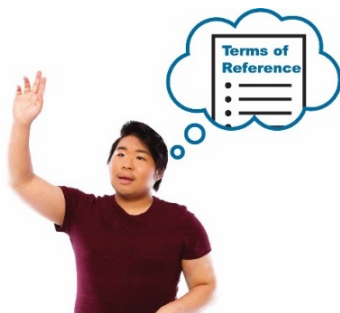
# Starting the Royal Commission



We have been talking to the community about what the Terms of Reference should include.



People had the chance to share their ideas with us from 13 to 28 March 2019.



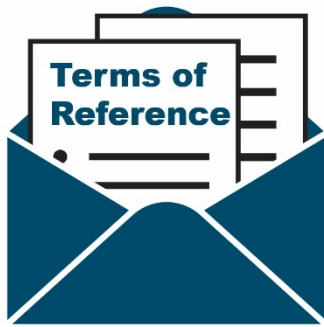
We received a lot of feedback.



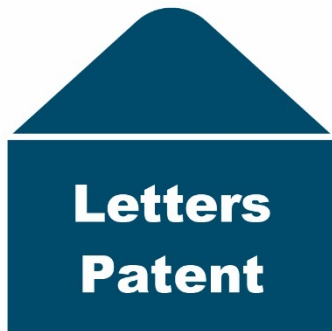
We have read and talked about all of that feedback.



We have now finished writing the Terms of Reference.



The Terms of Reference have been included in a letter.



This is called the Letters Patent.



It is signed by the Governor General and the Prime Minister.



This letter officially starts the Royal Commission.

## Why do we need a Royal Commission?



We need a Royal Commission because people with disability have the right to:

- feel like they are valued
- **dignity** – to be treated with respect.



People with disability should have the same human rights as everyone else.



And they should be free to use those rights.



People with disability have the right to be safe.

People with disability also have the right to be free from:



- **violence** – if someone is hurting you physically



- **abuse** – if someone is treating you badly



- **neglect** – if someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you



- **exploitation** – if someone is taking advantage of you.



All forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation against people with disability are **abhorrent**.



This means that it is really horrible.



Australia has an **obligation** to protect the rights of people with disability.



Obligations are the things we must do.



Australia shares this obligation with other countries around the world.



This is part of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (the UN Convention).



The UN Convention is an agreement around the world to protect the rights and dignity of people with disability.

All governments in Australia need to:



- provide funding and services to help people with disability be part of the community



- make laws to protect their rights.



This Royal Commission is being set up by the Australian Government.



It has the support of all the state and territory governments.



It is important that violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability are:

- **exposed** – when something isn't hidden anymore
- **examined** – when something is looked at carefully.



We need to work out the best ways to stop people with disability experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.





We also need to work out the best ways to take action when this is happening.



The actions that are needed will be based on what people with disability tell us.



During the Royal Commission, people with disability will share their experiences.



We will learn from these experiences.



## What will be examined?



The Terms of Reference ask the Commissioners to look at lots of different areas.



The Commissioners will look at all of the groups that provide services to people with disability.

They include:



- the government



- **institutions** – any large organisation such as a service provider, a school, a workplace, a business or a charity



- the community.



The Commissioners will find out how these groups can protect people with disability.



This includes looking at what has stopped people from:

- reporting a problem
- looking into a problem
- taking action.



The Commissioners will also look at how we can make our society better for people with disability.



We want to understand the best ways of working with and supporting people with disability.



And we want to make our society more inclusive.



This includes protecting everyone's right to live a safe and independent life.



The Commissioners can look at all areas.



They can decide what needs to be examined.

## What else will the Royal Commission cover?

We are asking the Commissioners to think about:



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



- the quality and safety of all services and supports



- the harm people with disability experience because of their many different needs and circumstances, including all:
  - age groups
  - genders – whether you are male, female or another gender
  - sexual orientation – who you are attracted to



- cultures – the language you speak or the way you live your life because of where you or your family were born
- if you are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person



- the important role that families and carers play



- the role of people who work with people with disability



- examples of the positive work that people are already doing to fix these problems



- what people have already found out and recommended in this area.



The Commissioners don't have to look into an issue that is already being dealt with in:

- another inquiry
- another investigation
- a court case.



The Commissioners will look at problems that individual people have experienced.



They will also look at problems that happen again and again.



During the Royal Commission, we want to make sure that people with disability, their families and carers can take part.





The Commissioners need to make sure that people with disability can give their **evidence** – proof that something is true.



This means that the Royal Commission needs to be **accessible** to all types of disability.



When something is accessible, everyone can use it.



This might be:

- a place or a building
- transport
- a service
- information
- a website.



During the Royal Commission, the Commissioners need to share information as soon as they can.



The Commissioners also need to make sure that evidence is treated in the right way.



This means that if evidence includes the name of a person who has had something horrible done to them, it's not used against that person in the future.



The Commissioners need to work out if they can use information and evidence from other inquiries.





This will help:

- make the Royal Commission go quicker
- stop **witnesses** having to tell their stories again.



A witness is a person who saw or knew that something horrible happened.

## What changes can be made?



At the end of the Royal Commission, the Commissioners will make **recommendations**.



These are ideas about changes that can be made.



The recommendations will be about how to improve the experiences of people with disability.



They may include changes to:

- the way services are run
- laws
- **policies** – government plans for the future.



The Commissioners will write a report explaining the changes that they think should be made.

## Word list



### **Abhorrent**

When something is really horrible.



### **Abuse**

If someone is treating you badly.



### **Accessible**

When something is accessible, everyone can use it.

This might be:

- a place or a building
- transport
- a service
- information
- a website.



### **Dignity**

To treat someone with respect.



### **Exploitation**

If someone is taking advantage of you.



### **Examined**

When something is looked at really carefully.



### **Exposed**

When something isn't hidden anymore.



### **Evidence**

Proof that something is true.



### **Institution**

Any large organisation such as a service provider, a school, a workplace, a business or a charity.



## **Neglect**

If someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you.



## **Obligations**

The things you must do.



## **Policies**

Government plans for how things will be done.



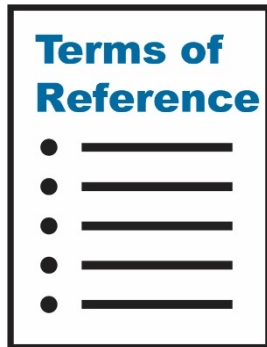
## **Recommendations**

Ideas about things that could be done.



## **Royal Commission**

A formal public inquiry. It is an official way of looking into a big problem and working out what went wrong.



## **Terms of Reference**

A list of the things that the Commissioners look into.



## **Violence**

If someone is hurting you physically.

## Contact us



You can phone 1800 880 052 between 9am and 7pm, Monday to Friday.

This is a number we are using for a short time.

It will be replaced by a new number soon.



If you are experiencing any violence or abuse, or if you feel unsafe, call 000 or contact the Police.



[www.dss.gov.au/DisabilityRoyalCommission](http://www.dss.gov.au/DisabilityRoyalCommission)

[www.ag.gov.au/About/RoyalCommissions](http://www.ag.gov.au/About/RoyalCommissions)



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