

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



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What is the Disability Royal Commission?

The Disability Royal Commission is responding to the experiences of people with physical, intellectual, sensory or psychosocial disability.

The Disability Royal Commission will investigate violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in the system. It will look at ways to improve services for people with disability and promote a more inclusive society.

The Royal Commission has funded VMIAC to support people with psychosocial disability to make submissions. You may identify more with the terms 'mental health problems/challenges', 'mental illness', 'emotional distress' or 'lived experience'.

VMIAC acknowledges the intersectionality of disability. You may experience more than one disability as a consumer of mental health services. We are here to support you either way.



<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/about-royal-commission>

How does this Royal Commission differ From the Victorian Mental Health Commission?

Making a submission to this Royal Commission is important because unlike the current Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health, it's specifically asking for people to demonstrate the violence, abuse and neglect they may have experienced within the mental health system.

Violence and abuse refers to a range of behaviours towards people with disability. These could include assault, sexual assault, constraints, restrictive practices (physical and chemical), forced treatments, forced interventions, humiliation and harassment, financial and economic abuse and significant violations of privacy and dignity on a systemic or individual basis.

Neglect includes physical or emotional neglect, passive neglect or wilful deprivation. Neglect can be a single significant incident or a systemic issue that involves depriving a person with disability of the basic necessities of life such as food, drink, shelter, access, mobility, clothing, education, medical care and treatment.



Caring for yourself

This Royal Commission is asking some big questions about your experiences of psychosocial disability. The process may bring up difficult feelings and memories. You might feel distressed when remembering and writing your experiences.

We have some suggestions:

- Focus on the things you most want to say. You don't have to cover everything. You also don't have to answer every question that is asked.
- Take your time writing your submission. You may need longer than a day or two.
- There is no right or wrong way to make a submission. Do what feels best for you.



Caring for yourself



Group submissions

The Royal Commission accepts group submissions – that is, submissions made with other people. You may find this less distressing than making an individual submission.

Ask for help



Your emotional wellbeing is important to us. VMIAC's Royal Commission peer support workers are available to chat if you require extra support in making your submission.

Contact VMIAC: 9380 3900 or email RCsupport@vmiac.org.au. You can also call the Royal Commission for help on 1800 517 199.



VMIAC workshops

VMIAC will be holding online workshops in April to support consumers to make submissions. Workshops are listed on VMIAC's website. You can also follow the workshops on VMIAC's Twitter and Facebook.



Frequently Asked Questions



How do I make a submission?

To make a submission, and understand the formats available for you to make a submission, head to: <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/share-your-story/make-your-submission> and click "Make your submission here".

What should I say in my submission?



This is your opportunity to say how you feel!

Think about your own experiences of psychosocial disability. You may find these prompts useful:

- Have you experienced violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation as a consumer of mental health and disability services? What would you like to share about these experiences?
- Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for how mental health services can be improved?
- What would you like Australia to know about living with psychosocial disability?



Frequently Asked Questions



What if I stop halfway?

You can't save your submission, but if you leave the screen open the information will stay there until you return to it.

What if I make a mistake?



You can go back to a previous screen by clicking 'back' at the bottom left-hand side of the page.



What happens to my information?

You can choose to submit your information in the following ways:

- Public – published on website
- Anonymous – published on website
- Anonymous – not published on website
- Restricted – not published in any way in any format
- Unsure

You may select Unsure if you have concerns about your confidentiality or require legal advice. For free independent legal advice, call 1800 771 800.



Frequently Asked Questions

Can I make a group submission?



Yes. You can make individual and group submissions. You can remain anonymous in either.

You can:

- make a submission for yourself and/or another individual
- submit on behalf of a group or organisation.



Can I make more than one submission?

Yes. You can make separate individual and group submissions. You can make an individual submission for yourself or for someone else. You can also act as a representative for a group making a submission.

Other Ways to Have Your Say

If you are unable to make an online submission:

- Email submissions to rcsupport@vmiac.org.au
- Call us on (03) 9380 3900
- Post your submissions to Building 1, 22 Aintree Street, Brunswick East, Vic, 3057
- For more information, head to our website www.vmiac.org.au