



Disability Royal Commission – FAQs

What is a Royal Commission?

Royal Commissions are established by the Australian Government and are the highest level of public inquiry. They investigate issues that are of national significance and particularly highlight systemic issues.

Royal Commissions have the power to collect information from individuals, government agencies and organisation and use this to inform and direct legislation, policy and regulatory environments.

Why is a Disability Royal Commission needed?

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

The Disability Royal Commission will examine why this is the case and inform governments, institutions, service providers, people with disability and the wider community on how we can prevent and better protect people with disability in the future.

How will it help people with disability?

Royal Commissions are powerful instruments for highlighting matters of public importance and creating momentum for inclusivity and social change.

This marks an important opportunity for people with disability and those who support them to be heard, participate in improving the disability sector and ensure people with disability are afforded full and equal enjoyment of all human rights.

Empowering people to speak up goes to the very heart of people feeling valued and respected as equal citizens in our community.

The Disability Royal Commission will have the power to direct legislation, policy and regulatory environments.

Will DSA participate in the Royal Commission?

Yes. DSA welcomes the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability and the opportunity to improve the lives of people with disability.



DSA, along with many other disability service providers, is expected to participate in the Royal Commission. We will do this with an absolute willingness to improve the lives of people we serve and to benefit the community.

DSA will participate and engage openly and transparently with the Commission and with our customers, their families and carers.

Can DSA customers and their families and carers participate?

Yes. DSA encourages and commends those who wish to participate in the Disability Royal Commission.

We will provide support for people with disability and their families to contribute their unique insights and experiences to this important national conversation.

Any customer wishing to be involved or with questions can contact Carolynne Lepp, Chief Risk Officer, drc@dsa.org.au or 02 8379 3314.

The Disability Royal Commission has also [put in a range of supports to make it accessible to people with disability. This includes legal, financial, emotional and advocacy support.](#)

Can people still make a complaint or provide feedback to DSA?

Yes. DSA continues to welcome direct feedback. We recognise the important role we play in the lives of people with disability, as well as their families and loved ones and rely on feedback to see what we are doing well, discover what else we could be doing and learn how we can improve.

We welcome all feedback and complaints and take all concerns seriously. We will always respond quickly and respectfully to all feedback or any concerns raised.

Complaints can be made via our [website](#) or to our Customer Connections team on 1300 372 121 (business hours) or email customerconnections@dsa.org.au.

How will the Disability Royal Commission work?

The Disability Royal Commission was established in April 2019 and commenced in September 2019 under the direction of the Australian Government. The Hon Ronald Sackville AO QC has been appointed as Chair of the Royal Commission and will be supported by six other Royal Commissioners.

The exact scope and issues to be considered are set out in the Disability Royal Commission's [Terms of Reference](#). There is also an [Easy Read version available](#).



The Commissioners are required to provide an interim report no later than 30 October 2020, and a final report by no later than 29 April 2022. As evidence is uncovered, Issues Papers may also be released during the three-year period and recommendations made as the Commission warrants it.

Which areas will be focused on?

The Disability Royal Commission will examine violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation across seven key themes:

- Education and learning
- Homes and living
- Relationships
- Economic participation
- Health
- Justice
- Individual autonomy, self-determination and the right to the dignity of risk
- Community participation and geographical challenges

At the opening sitting, Commissioners highlighted that particular focus would be given to:

- The UN Convention on the rights of People with Disabilities, including the importance of education, employment, free or affordable healthcare services, access to justice and living in the community
- The experiences of First Nations people with disability
- Understanding the experiences within services and settings as well as within the community

How does the Commission collect Information?

The Commission will collect information by:

- Holding community forums
- Providing opportunities for people with disability and stakeholders to make submissions
- Undertaking investigations designed to ascertain the nature and extent of violence, abuse
- neglect and exploitation of people with disability
- Facilitating people with disability who wish to do so to tell their stories safely
- Conducting public hearings which focus on case studies and policy issues
- Commissioning research projects
- Using the Commission's powers to gather information relevant to the terms of reference



Conflicts of Interest

The Commission has addressed community concerns regarding potential conflicts of interest of Commissioners. Chair, The Hon Ronald Sackville AO QC, stated:

'I, as Chair, will not authorise a Commissioner to participate in a public hearing if that Commissioner's participation would give rise to a reasonable perception of a conflict of interest or a reasonable apprehension of bias.

... Under no circumstances will anyone be asked to tell their story to a Commissioner with whom they do not feel comfortable.'

