



Highlights of the First Public Sitting

Monday 16 September 2019

Easy Read version

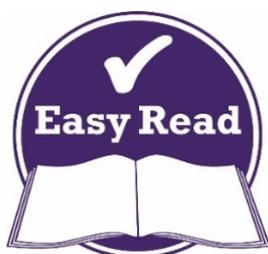


How to use this document



The Disability Royal Commission
(the Royal Commission) wrote this document.

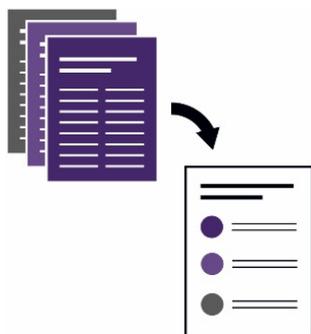
When you see the word 'we', it means
the Royal Commission.



We have written this information in an easy
to read way. We use pictures to explain
some ideas. We call this Easy Read.



We have written some words in **bold**.
We explain what these words mean.
There is a list of these words on page 23.



This Easy Read document is a summary
of another document.



You can find other Easy Read documents on [our website](#).

They include:



- A fact sheet about the Royal Commission
- Practice Guidelines
- Information about making a submission.

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What is this document about?



This document is about what happened at the first **public sitting** of the Disability Royal Commission on Monday 16 September 2019.



A public sitting is a meeting where our Commissioners talk to the public about the Royal Commission.



We explain who the Commissioners are on page 7.

At our first public sitting, our Commissioners:



- officially opened the Royal Commission



- talked about how the Royal Commission will work



- told the public what our goals are.

Who are the Commissioners?



The Honourable Mr Ronald Sackville AO QC is leading the Royal Commission.

He is called the Chair of the Commission.



The other Commissioners are:

- Commissioner Barbara Bennett PSM
- Commissioner Rhonda Galbally AC
- Commissioner Andrea Mason OAM
- Commissioner Alastair McEwin AM
- Commissioner John Ryan AM.

The letters after each Commissioner's name are for awards they have been given:



- PSM – Public Service Medal
- AC – Companion of the Order of Australia
- OAM – Medal of the Order of Australia
- AM – Member of the Order of Australia.



At our first public sitting, Chair Sackville introduced a new commissioner – Commissioner Roslyn Atkinson.

He told everyone about Ms Atkinson's:



- work experience
- job as President of the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Tribunal.

What happened at our first public sitting?



Commissioner Andrea Mason opened our first public sitting with an **Acknowledgement of Country**.



An Acknowledgement of Country is when we recognise the First Nations peoples of Australia.



They were the first people to live on and use the land where we were meeting.



In the Acknowledgement, we show that we understand that.



Commissioner Mason gave part of her Acknowledgement of Country in **Auslan**.



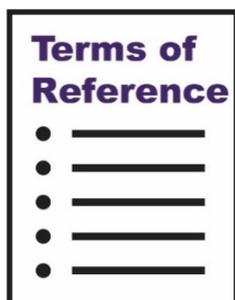
Auslan is sign language used by the Australian Deaf community.



She also talked about what life is like for First Nations peoples with disability.

Terms of Reference

Commissioner Sackville talked about the **Terms of Reference**.



The Terms of Reference are a list of the things that the Royal Commission should look into.



You can find an Easy Read version of the Terms of Reference on our website.



He said that the Royal Commission needs people with disability to share their experiences with us.



Senior Counsel Assisting, Rebecca Treston QC, talked about some words used in the Terms of Reference:



- **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.



She shared some facts about how many people in Australia experience these things.

↓ **65**



1 in 8 people aged younger than 65 has a disability.

65+



1 in 2 people aged over 65 has a disability.



1 in 18 people with disability has experienced:

- physical violence
- sexual violence.

The numbers are higher for:



- women with disability



- First Nations peoples with disability.

Conflict of interest

Commissioner Sackville talked about **conflicts of interest**.



A conflict of interest is when a Commissioner has a relationship or connection with a person that might affect how that person shares their story.



Commissioner Sackville said he won't let Commissioners take part in public hearings where there might be a conflict of interest.

Accessibility and engagement



Commissioner McEwin talked about:

- **accessibility**
- **engagement.**



If something is accessible, everyone can use it.

This might be:

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



Engagement is about:

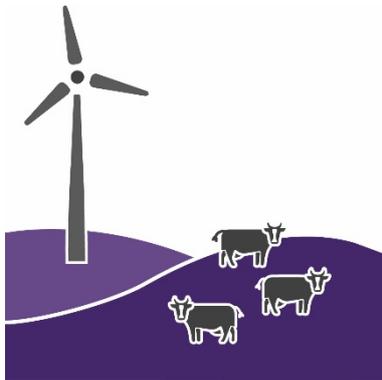
- how many people take part
- how much people get involved.



Commissioner McEwin said accessibility and engagement are:

- very important to the Royal Commission
- at the centre of everything the Commission does.

He also said the Royal Commission will reach out to people who:



- live in **rural and remote areas** – places that are far away from cities or towns



- can't leave the place they live in to go to a meeting or a hearing.

Submissions



A **submission** is a document that explains a person's experience or idea.



Senior Counsel Assisting, Rebecca Treston QC, talked about how people can make submissions to the Royal Commission.



To get information about how to make submissions, please visit **our website**.



She said the Royal Commission can take submissions:

- in languages other than English
- in Auslan
- in the languages of First Nations people.



We are looking for the best ways to get submissions in different formats, such as:

- audio
- video.

Legal advice and support

Senior Counsel Assisting, Rebecca Treston QC, talked about legal advice and support for **witnesses**.



A witness is a person who saw or knew that something happened and is going to tell the Royal Commission about it.



She explained the support the Australian Government will give people who want to share their experiences with the Royal Commission.



This support will be available for all people with disability across Australia.

This includes:



- First Nations peoples



- people from different cultures who don't speak English



- people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer



- people who live in:
 - care facilities
 - prisons
 - detention centres.



She said you don't need to be a witness before the Commission to get this legal advice and support.

She also talked about how the legal advice and support will:



- be independent – it won't take sides



- show respect and understanding for different cultures



- show respect and understanding for any **trauma** a person with disability has been through.



Trauma is the pain and memories from bad experiences from the past.

Private sessions



Senior Counsel Assisting, Rebecca Treston QC, talked about changes to the law for the Royal Commission.



The law is the *Royal Commissions Act 1902*.



The law now says the Royal Commission can hold **private sessions** too.



A private session is a hearing where you can share your experiences privately.



This means people can tell the Royal Commission about their experiences:

- privately
- safely.

What will happen next?



There will be more public sittings in the future.



To stay in touch with the work we are doing, please visit **our website**.



You can sign up for our email newsletter to receive updates.

Word list



Abuse

If someone is treating you badly.



Accessibility

If something is accessible, everyone can use it.

This might be:

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



Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is when we recognise the First Nations people.

They were the first people to live on and use the land where we were meeting.



Auslan

Sign language used by the Australian Deaf community.



Engagement

Engagement is about:

- how many people take part
- how much people get involved.



Exploitation

If someone is taking advantage of you.



Neglect

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



Private session

A private session is a hearing where you can share your experiences privately.

It is less formal than a public hearing.



Public sitting

A public sitting is a meeting where our Commissioners talk to the public about the Commission.



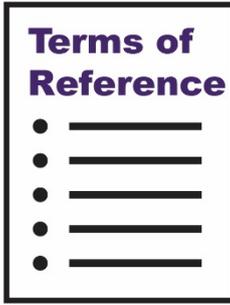
Rural and remote areas

Places that are far away from cities or towns.



Submission

A document that explains a person's experience or idea.



Terms of Reference

A list of the things that the Royal Commission should look into.



Trauma

The pain and memories from bad experiences from the past.



Violence

If someone is hurting you physically.



Witness

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



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