



Know your rights

Will you be a witness at a public hearing?

This fact sheet explains what will happen and your rights when you are called to be a witness for the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion (Royal Commission).

What is a public hearing?

A public hearing is a formal hearing of the Royal Commission. It is open to the public, recorded and live streamed on the Royal Commission's website. The Commissioner hears evidence from witnesses and can ask questions. A witness is a person who will speak about their experience at a public hearing.

What does it mean to be a witness?

The Solicitors and Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission select witnesses. This may happen after you have made a submission to the Royal Commission.

You might be asked to give a witness statement. This is a formal document about your experiences. It sets out the evidence you will give to the Royal Commission.

At the start of giving your evidence at the hearing, you will be asked to make an oath or affirmation to state you are telling the truth.

You may be asked questions by Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission and / or the Commissioner.

You can ask for a lawyer to assist you at the hearing.

Can I get help with my witness statement?

Yes. If you are asked to be a witness, you should get legal advice. The Royal Commission Legal Assistance Service (RCLAS) can provide you with free, confidential and independent legal support.

If you are asked to be a witness, you can have your own lawyer represent you. They can speak to the Royal Commission on your behalf and support you to prepare your witness statement. If you would like a lawyer to represent you in the hearing, we can help you to find one.

Other support

The Royal Commission will support you to give evidence. They will set up any supports you need to be a witness. We can help you tell the Royal Commission what support you need.

If you want a support person, that person can attend with you. You can also ask for counselling support before, during and after you give evidence.

Receiving a witness summons

Before you attend a public hearing as a witness, the Royal Commission will give you a formal document called a 'summons'. This gives you legal protections when you share your experiences.

Who is at a public hearing?

People at the public hearing can include:

- The Commissioner;
- Solicitors and Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission;
- Other Royal Commission staff, such as IT and counselling staff;
- Other witnesses; and
- The media.

What can the media report?

The Royal Commission can make orders about how information is, or is not, reported by the media. This can include keeping the identity of a witness or certain information confidential.

If there are no orders made, then the media can report any information shared during a public hearing.

We can assist you to talk to the media about whether some of your evidence or identity can be kept confidential.

Who can I contact if I have more questions?

The Royal Commission Legal Assistance Service is independent and separate from the Royal Commission.

Any conversation between yourself and a lawyer will be confidential and protected by legal privilege.

Contact the Royal Commission Legal Assistance Service for free, independent and confidential legal advice.



1800 976 198



RCASClegalhelp@nationallegalaid.org.au



For more information use the QR code or visit nationallegalaid.org.au/national-services/rcasc-legal-help



An interpreter can be arranged upon request.

If you are hearing or speech impaired, you can contact us by calling the National Relay Service on **133 677** (TTY) or **1300 555 727**

You can find more contact options to suit your needs, on the National Relay Service website via www.accesshub.gov.au



Royal Commission
Legal Assistance Service

Disclaimer: This information is intended as a general information guide only. It should not be relied upon as legal advice. We recommend that you speak with a lawyer about your individual situation.



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