

#EveryStoryMatters

A guide to preparing a submission to the Aged Care Royal Commission

The Aged Care Royal Commission

Young people in residential aged care and the issues relating to this group have been identified as a high and early priority for the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

Why the Royal Commission is so significant

While the Royal Commission is an opportunity to improve the experience of all people in aged care, it is also a significant opportunity to address the changes needed for young people with disability to avoid aged care in the first place.

Who does the Royal Commission want to hear from?

The Royal Commission is committed to hearing from young Australians with disability who have narrowly avoided aged care, are currently in aged care, or previously lived in aged care.

The Royal Commission is also eager to hear from those who have indirect experience, such as family members.

Personal stories and experiences are critical for the Royal Commission to hear. They are the most powerful way to demonstrate that aged care should not be a routine solution to the housing and support needs of young people with disability.

The Summer Foundation has created this toolkit to assist young people with disability and/or their families to make a written submission to the Aged Care Royal Commission.

There is no current end date for submissions, at this stage submissions will be accepted up to the end of June, 2019.

How do I make a submission?

There are four ways you can make a submission to the Royal Commission.

1. You can go to the commission's website and complete the submission form:
<https://agedcaresubmissions.lawinorder.com.au>. This must be done in one sitting so it may be useful to prepare what you want to share in a Word document first and have it ready to copy and paste into the form.
2. If you have difficulty using the online form you can download the form as a PDF from the website <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/submissions/Pages/default.aspx> and email your completed submission to: ACRCenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au
3. If you are unable to use either of the electronic forms, you can phone the Royal Commission on 1800 960 711 to make alternative arrangements to have your voice heard.
4. You can write to the Royal Commission at GPO Box 1151, Adelaide SA 5001.

What will happen with the information I provide?

The Royal Commission may make the information you provide public unless you ask it not to. You can:

- Agree to your submission being made public under your name
- Agree to your submission being made public anonymously
- Not agree to your submission being made public

At the end of the Royal Commission all records, including submissions, become accessible under the Freedom of Information Act. If you are concerned about this, you should consider making an anonymous submission. You can select this option in both the online form and the PDF version; or say that is what you want in your letter.

If you provide contact details the Royal Commission may get in touch with you to get more details about your submission.

How do I prepare a submission?

There are five simple steps to make a submission.

1. Choose the focus of your submission
2. Tell your story
3. Complete your submission form
4. Include a photo of yourself or other relevant photos (optional)
5. The final step - submit/send your story to the Royal Commission

Before you start work on your submission, read all of this guide so you understand the whole process.

1 Choose the focus of your submission

You need to think about the main thing you would like the Royal Commission to know about your experiences in aged care, avoiding aged care or being able to leave aged care.

The Royal Commission will consider:

- All forms of aged care services funded by the Federal Government
- All aspects of the quality and safety of aged care services
- The critical role of the aged care workforce and the need for it to work with families, carers and others providing care and support
- The barriers for older Australians to getting high quality aged care services
- The interface between the aged care system and other health services, including disability services. This should consider how people transition from other care places or between aged care facilities
- Examples of good practice and innovative models of aged care

Both the online form and the PDF version include the full Terms of Reference that will help you focus on particular areas you would like to respond to that are relevant to the Royal Commission's inquiry.

They are also available at:

<https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/Pages/Terms-of-reference.aspx>

2 Tell your story

Every story matters - it is critical for the Royal Commission to hear from people about their experiences. You are the expert in your journey, so you are the best person to tell your story to the Royal Commission.

It may be difficult to decide which of your experiences in aged care are the most important to include in your story. But once you have worked this out, completing a submission to the Royal Commission is an easy process.

Before you start writing your story, take some time to think about your ideas.

Here are some questions you might like to consider to help decide what you want to tell the Royal Commission:

- Why are/were you (or your family member) in aged care?
- How long have you been/were you in aged care?
- Were you happy to move into aged care?
- What is it about your experience with aged care that is most significant?
- What was your best experience in aged care? What was the worst one?
- What did either experience teach you that you want others to know about?
- What do you think the top priority for the commission should be?
- If the Royal Commission was to take away one message from your submission, what would that be?

To help the Royal Commission learn how people's needs can better be met when they are facing entry to aged care or considering leaving aged care, you might want to consider including information about some of these questions:

- What started the process of you (or your family member) deciding and preparing to move out of aged care?
- What types of things did you need to consider?
- Who helped you?
- What went well with the process of moving out?
- What would have made the process better or smoother?

Now you are ready to write your story

We suggest you write your story about your personal experience in a Word document where you can easily review it. Then it can then be easily copied and pasted in to the Royal Commission online form, the downloaded PDF version or in to a letter.

Writing your story so it is easy for other people to understand is important. A structured format can be a good way to organise your thoughts and paint a clear picture for others.

Using the information you have thought about, we suggest you consider writing the story of your experience like this. (This outline has been written for a person with disability, but can be easily adapted to be used by a family member).

Set the scene:

- In one or two sentences, introduce yourself
- Describe why you are/were in aged care
- Did you have a choice about moving in to aged care? How long have you been/were you in aged care?

The reason for your submission:

- Describe the experiences you want the Royal Commission to know about
- Describe why they are of concern to you and what can be learnt from them
- Tell the Royal Commission how you were able to leave aged care or avoid it, and what that has meant to you

A summary:

- Briefly summarise what you have already said to reinforce the points
- Say what you want the Royal Commission to recommend

The section for your story in the online form has a limit of 20,000 characters, which is about three pages of typed information.

3 Complete your submission form

You need to decide how you want to make your submission to the Royal Commission.

There are three ways to make a written submission:

The online form

You can go to the commission's website to complete the form:

<https://agedcaresubmissions.lawinorder.com.au>

This must be done in one sitting.

The first sections are multiple choice questions that allow you to provide details about yourself.

The "What would you like to tell the Royal Commission" section is where you include your story, so it is important to have the information you have prepared in your Word document ready to copy and paste into the form.

The form also includes the section where you say whether you want your information to be made public.

Download the PDF

If you have difficulty using the online form you can download the form as a PDF from the website <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/submissions/Pages/default.aspx>.

You can then type directly in to the downloaded form.

The first sections are multiple choice questions that allow you to provide details about yourself.

The "What would you like to tell the Royal Commission" section is where you include your story, so it is important to have the information you have prepared in your Word document ready to copy and paste into the form.

The form also includes the section where you say whether you want your information to be made public.

Write a letter

If you decide to write to the Royal Commission:

- On the first page of your submission include your name, address and contact details
- Indicate if you are happy for these to be made public
- Copy and paste your story from your Word document into your letter

Other

If you are unable to use these electronic options, you can phone the Royal Commission on 1800 960 711 to make alternative arrangements to have your story heard.

4 Include a photo of yourself

Including at least one photo of yourself as part of your submission is a powerful way to bring your story to life for the Royal Commission.

Photos can be attached as "supporting material" in both the online and PDF forms.

Photos can be included with your mailed submission.

5 The final step - submit/send your submission to the Royal Commission

- If you are using the online form, just press the 'submit' button when you have finished and it will be saved and sent.
- If you have downloaded and completed the PDF version, email it to:
ACRCenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au
- Make a note of the submission number on your form for your records. If you supply an email address you will get a confirmation that your submission has been received.
- If you are writing to the Royal Commission, send your submission to:
Royal Commission into Aged Care, GPO Box 1151, Adelaide SA 5001

Disclaimer

All information is prepared and presented by Summer Foundation to assist the public to provide submissions to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Summer Foundation is independent of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.