



## Guide to witness entitlements

The Royal Commission selects a small number of people to appear as witnesses at public hearings. Witnesses help the Royal Commission to understand how institutions have responded to allegations and instances of child sexual abuse.

### Types of Witnesses

Witnesses will usually be one of the following:

- **Victim / survivor witnesses:**  
People who suffered abuse
- **Whistle-blowers:**  
People who expose wrongdoing
- **Institutional witnesses:**  
People who are, or have previously been, associated with the institution being investigated
- **Expert witnesses:**  
A person who is a specialist in their field

If you have received a summons to give evidence, or have been asked to participate, at a public hearing the Royal Commission will offer you information and support.

The Royal Commission website has information and a short video explaining how public hearings work and what to expect when you are a witness:  
<http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/public-hearings/witnesses>

### Financial entitlements

The Royal Commission will contact you before the public hearing starts to discuss the types of expenses it can help you with and any special requirements you might have. There are guidelines that set out financial entitlements including:

- Help with travel expenses
- Witness appearance fees
- Reimbursement of lost wages, salary or fees

The Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department has a legal financial assistance scheme that provides funding for legal representation (such as lawyers) and disbursements (for things like photocopying and obtaining reports). More information on this scheme is available by calling 1800 117 995.

### Travel expenses

If you are called as a witness, and live more than 50 kilometres from where a public hearing is being held, financial assistance is available to help with your travel expenses. The Royal Commission can also pay for a support person of your choice to come with you to the hearing.



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Travel expenses could include:

- Airfares
- Accommodation
- Meal allowance
- Taxi/train/bus fares

Witnesses who live within 50 kilometres of where a public hearing is being held are not entitled to financial assistance for travel expenses.

### Witness appearance fee and loss of wages

All witnesses, no matter where they live, who appear before the Royal Commission are entitled to a witness appearance fee\* of \$123.90 per day.

Expert witnesses are entitled to a witness appearance fee\* of \$1,174.90 per day, in recognition of their specialist skills and knowledge.

The Royal Commission may also be able to assist with reimbursement for loss of wages, salary or fees. Your Royal Commission contact person can discuss this with you.

\*Witness appearance fees are set by the Australian Government and are subject to change.

### Contact us

Witnesses will be given the contact details of a Royal Commission staff member who is able to assist with booking travel and answering questions about witness entitlements.

 1800 099 340

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