



Villamanta Disability
Rights Legal Service Inc.

MEDIA RELEASE

Advocacy support for Disability Royal Commission now available throughout Victoria

19/8/2020

People with disability living in Victoria who have experienced violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation can now access free and independent advocacy support.

Around 4.4 million Australians have disability and research shows they are more likely to experience violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation than people without disability.

Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service Inc. (Villamanta) is one of 50 providers to receive additional funding from the Australian Government to provide individual advocacy support to help people engage with the Disability Royal Commission.

Sue Wolter, the Disability Royal Commission Advocate of Villamanta, says Villamanta helps to protect the rights and interests of people with disability, and supports people to speak up.

“Advocates are supporting an increasing number of people with disability and their representatives since the Disability Royal Commission kicked off in 2019,” Sue Wolter says.

“Advocates can help people to make a submission to the Disability Royal Commission, arrange accessible supports such as interpreters, and connect people to services such as legal, financial and other supports.”

“Advocates are also available to support people with disability to make decisions about engaging with the Disability Royal Commission.”

For advocacy support, contact Villamanta on free-call 1800 014 111, 9am to 5pm

People can also contact the National Counselling and Referral Service on **1800 421 468** 9am to 6pm (AEST) weekdays and 9am to 5pm (AEST) weekends and national public holidays.

People who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can contact Villamanta through the National Relay Service on **133 677**.

Villamanta can arrange free translations and interpreting for people who need help in another language.

Visit Villamanta's website www.villamanta.org.au
see also Villamanta's facebook page for more information.

Visit the [Department of Social Services' website](#) for captioned videos, Easy Read and Auslan resources, and a full list of organisations providing counselling, advocacy, legal and financial supports for the Disability Royal Commission.

If you are currently experiencing any form of violence or abuse, or you are concerned for your or someone else's safety, call 000 immediately.

Media contact: Deidre Griffiths, mobile 0414 216 160.

Note to media

When reporting on matters relating to disability, particularly in relation to the Disability Royal Commission or matters relating to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability, please include the following national support number:

National Counselling and Referral Service: 1800 421 468

Alternatively, you are invited to include the following:

Free, independent counselling and advocacy support is available for people with disability who have experienced violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation; and anyone affected by the Disability Royal Commission. Call the National Counselling and Referral Service on 1800 421 468, 9am–6pm weekdays and 9am–5pm weekends and national public holidays, or ask to be connected to a counsellor advocate near you.

For more information, including a copy of media guidelines, please visit www.dss.gov.au/disability-royal-commission-support