



**DEFENCE & VETERANS
LEGAL SERVICE**

Free | Independent | Confidential

What happens after a private session?

This factsheet is about what happens to your information after you share it in a private session.

Sharing your experience in private

A private session is a confidential meeting between you and a commissioner from the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide (the Royal Commission).

It is the most private way to share your experiences and your information can only be disclosed in very limited circumstances.

Registrations for private sessions closed in April 2023.

How your information will be used

If you share information in a private session, it will be used by the Royal Commission to help it perform its functions and inform its work.

The Royal Commission might include parts of what you share in its reports and when making recommendations. If the Royal Commission does this, it will not include your personal details or anything that could identify you.

It is an offence for anyone outside of the Royal Commission to share or use your information without your consent.

Keeping your experience private

If you share your experiences in a private session, the information cannot be accessed through Freedom of Information requests or by court subpoena. Information shared in a private session remains confidential for 99 years after the Royal Commission ends.

After the private session, the Royal Commission may ask if you want to be a witness at a public hearing. You can decide if you want to do this, or you can choose for your experiences to stay private.

Legal protections

If you share your experience at a private session, you will have certain legal protections, which continue even after the Royal Commission ends. These legal protections are outlined in our factsheet, 'How am I protected in a private session?'

If you repeat your experience outside the private session, on social media or in public, you may lose the legal protections.

It is a crime for someone to:

- injure you;
- cause you disadvantage; or
- for your employer to take legal action against you because you shared your experience at a private session.

If you or someone you know has been bribed, hurt or disadvantaged for attending a private session, you can choose to report it to police for investigation. The Defence and Veterans Legal Service can discuss your options with you.

Who can I contact if I have more questions?

Call us on 1800 33 1800 for free legal advice.

The Defence and Veterans Legal Service is independent and separate from the Royal Commission, the Department of Defence, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

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