Information and support for those attending the Special Commission of Inquiry concerning the investigation of certain child sexual abuse allegations in the Hunter region

Attending the Special Commission may be an overwhelming experience. People may feel anxious, stressed or worried about:

- having to remember and talk about what happened;
- being asked difficult questions; or
- hearing other people's experiences.

Participating in the Special Commission may result in feelings or memories related to the experience resurfacing. It may trigger memories of losses or events that happened many years ago and bring back feelings of anger, grief and sadness.

Experiencing resurfacing emotions from past events is normal. Everyone responds to being a victim of abuse differently. There is no right or wrong way.

It is important for people to look after themselves and to know that help is available.

**HOW PEOPLE CAN LOOK AFTER THEMSELVES**

- By seeking support from family and friends and telling them about feelings and current experiences.
- By not being too hard on themselves – they should expect to feel unsettled by hearing/seeing information during the Special Commission and in the media.
- By getting plenty of sleep, gentle exercise and eating healthy regular meals.
- By keeping to normal routines.
- By avoiding excessive use of alcohol, smoking or other drugs.
- By talking to a medical practitioner for professional help and advice.
- By seeking counselling if they are feeling overwhelmed or need more support.

**HOW COUNSELLING CAN HELP**

Counselling can:

- provide support and the opportunity to talk to a trained professional in a confidential environment;
- assist in finding ways to manage the stress and trauma associated with the experience; and
- arrange connections with other support services or referrals to agencies in the local area.

For more information about how to access free counselling, referrals and other support call the Victims Access Line at Victims Services:

Phone (8:30am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday) ........................................................................................................................... 1800 633 063
Sydney metropolitan area (8:30am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday) ........................................................................ (02) 8688 5511
Email .......................................................................................................................................................................................................... vs@agd.nsw.gov.au
Website ................................................................................................................................................................................. www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/vs
OTHER SUPPORT AGENCIES

ASCA – Adults Surviving Child Abuse
Professional phone support for adult survivors of child abuse and those who support them. Also provides advocacy, information, and education and training workshops. Available nationally

Phone (9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday) ............................................................... 1300 657 380
Email ............................................................................................................................ counsellors@asca.org.au
Website ..................................................................................................................... www.asca.org.au

CASAC SERVICES

Phone ...........................................................................................................................(02) 9750 0500
Website ...................................................................................................................... www.casac.org.au

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH
Support, information, advocacy and support groups for victims of crime. Support groups available in the Sutherland shire.

Phone (9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday) ............................................................... (02) 9542 4029
Website ..................................................................................................................... www.enoughisenough.org.au

NSW RAPE CRISIS CENTRE
Individual counselling via telephone and online. Community counselling specifically for victims of historical childhood sexual assault based in Women’s Health Centres and online group work. Also provides referrals to private therapists. Available statewide including telephone/online services

Phone (24 hours / 7 days a week) ............................................................................... 1800 424 017
National Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling Line (24 hours / 7 days) ........ 1800 737 732
Website ..................................................................................................................... www.nswrapecrisis.com.au

NSW SEXUAL ASSAULT SERVICES – NSW Health
Counselling, case-management, facilitating forensic services, advocacy, liaison with police and other services, court support for sexual assault victims. Available statewide.

For contact details of local Sexual Assault Services, please see the webpage below.

Website ..................................................................................................................... http://www0.health.nsw.gov.au/PublicHealth/sexualassault/contacts.asp

VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE LEAGUE INC NSW (VOCAL)
Support, information, court preparation and advocacy for victims of crime. Available in the Newcastle and Sydney Metropolitan areas, email and phone support statewide.

Phone (9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday) ............................................................... (02) 4961 4755
Email .......................................................................................................................... ceo@vocal.org.au
Website ..................................................................................................................... www.vocal.org.au
ZIMMERMAN SERVICES – HEALING AND SUPPORT SERVICE
Zimmerman Services provides child protection services for all of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Healing and Support Services works with victims and their families who have been adversely affected by child sexual assault perpetrated by members of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

Phone (9.00am to 2.30pm, Monday / 9.00am to 5.00pm, Tuesday to Thursday) .............................................. (02) 4979 1390
Email ...........................................................................................................................................................................healing.support@mn.catholic.org.au

WA VICTIM SUPPORT SERVICE
Provides free, confidential counselling and support services for victims of crime in Western Australia.
The webpage has a list of regional victim support and child witness service locations

Phone (8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday) ............................................................................................................. (08) 9425 2850
Freecall ........................................................................................................................................................................... 1800 818 988
Email .............................................................................................................................................................................vocrg@justice.wa.gov.au

VICTIM SUPPORT AND CHILD WITNESS SERVICE – Albany Courthouse
For victims residing near Kojonup WA.

Phone (8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday) ................................................................................................................ (08) 9845 5222