



Royal Commission
into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation
of People with Disability

Public Hearing Report

Public hearing 33

How and why Kaleb and Jonathon experienced
violence, abuse and neglect

Easy Read version



Brisbane

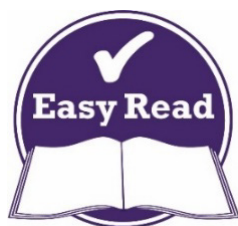
8 to 10 May 2023

How to use this report



The Disability Royal Commission
(the Royal Commission) wrote this report.

When you see the word 'we', it means
the Royal Commission.



We wrote this report in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.



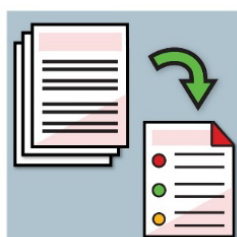
We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these bold words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 33.



This Easy Read report is a **summary**
of another report.

A summary only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other report on our website.

www.disability.royalcommission.gov.au



You can ask for help to read this report.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.



In this paper we talk about some things that might upset some people.



If you get upset and need support, we have a support service you can contact.



Their contact details are on page 39.

What's in this report?

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What's this Royal Commission about?



A **royal commission** is how the government looks into a big problem.

It helps us find out:

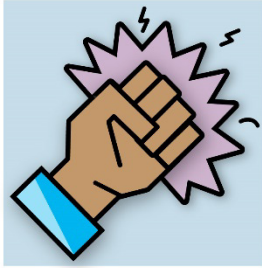


- what went wrong

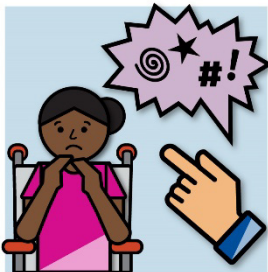


- how it can be fixed.

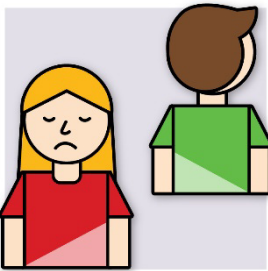
This Royal Commission is about how people with disability experience:



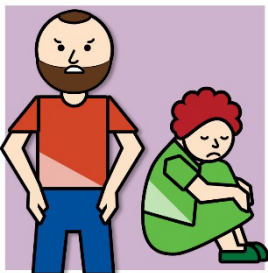
- **violence** – when someone hurts you physically



- **abuse** – when someone treats you badly



- **neglect** – when someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you



- **exploitation** – when someone takes advantage of you.

What's this report about?



This report is about Public **hearing** 33.



A hearing is a **formal, public** meeting.



When something is formal, there are strict rules about how it should be done.

When something is public:



- anyone can watch



- we share the records of what happened so anyone can read them.



We hold hearings as part of our work at the Royal Commission.

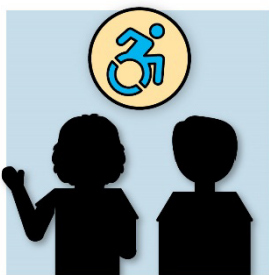


We held Public hearing 33 in 2023 from 8 May to 10 May.



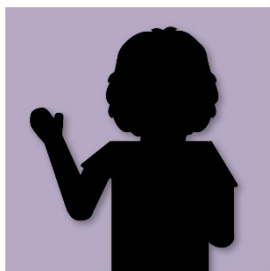
This report talks about what we heard at Public hearing 33.

What was Public hearing 33 about?

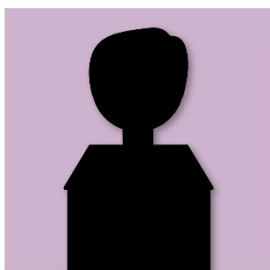


Public hearing 33 was about what happened to 2 brothers with disability.

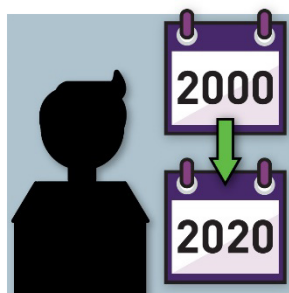
In this report we call them:



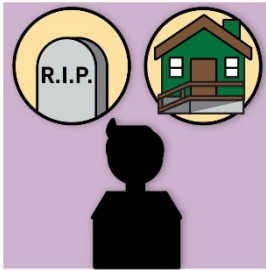
- Kaleb



- Jonathon.



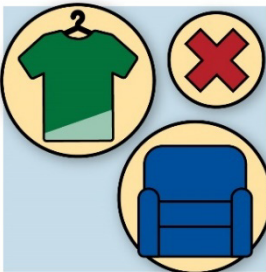
Between 2000 and 2020 they were in the care of their dad, Paul Barrett.



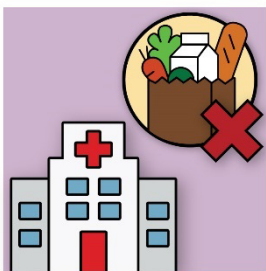
On 27 May 2020, emergency services found that Paul Barrett had died at home.



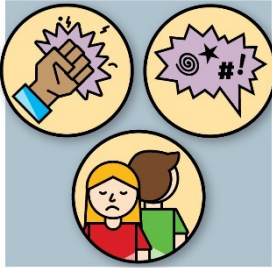
Kaleb and Jonathon were also at home.
They were locked in a room.



They had no clothes on.
And there was no furniture in the room.



Kaleb and Jonathon spent 2 weeks in hospital
because they hadn't had enough food to eat.



We looked into how and why Kaleb and Jonathon experienced:

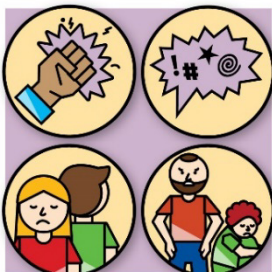
- violence
- abuse
- neglect.



This includes neglect of their **rights**.

Rights are rules that say you can choose how you live your own life.

And they explain how other people must treat you.



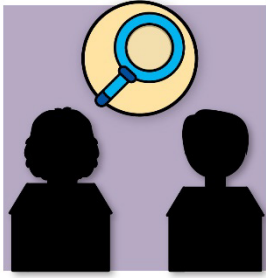
In other public hearings we focus on each time people experienced:

- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.

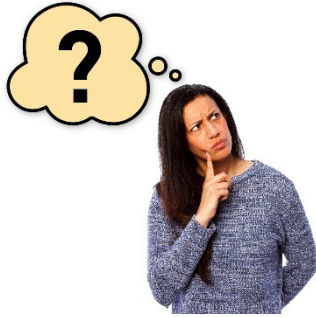


But this public hearing was different.

This is because their experiences happened over 20 years.



We focused on all of Kaleb and Jonathon's experiences over their lifetimes.



We wanted to know:

- how these things could happen
- why they happened.



The hearing also looked at how the Queensland government might have kept Kaleb and Jonathon safe.



Including what the government:

- could have done
- should have done.



The hearing also looked at how Kaleb and Jonathon live now.

Who took part in Public hearing 33?



A **witness** is a person who:

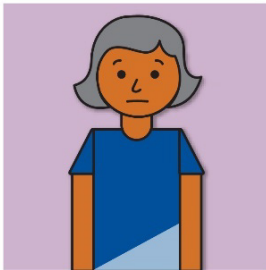
- had an experience
- saw or knew that something happened.



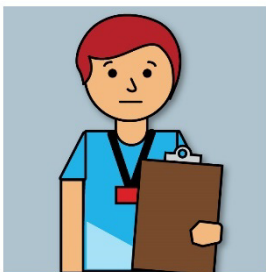
13 witnesses gave **evidence**.

When you give evidence, you talk about your experience.

The witnesses included:



- a person who lived next door to Kaleb and Jonathon



- a person who works for Kaleb and Jonathon's current **provider**.



A provider supports people by delivering a service.

The witnesses also included people who work for:



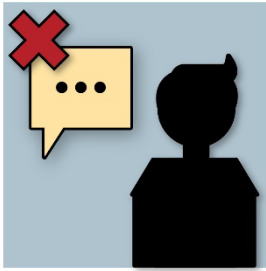
- Queensland government departments



- the National Disability Insurance Agency



- government services – including the police.



There wasn't anyone who could speak for Paul Barrett.



In the hearing we used information that we all agreed is true.

We call them 'agreed facts'.



The Disability Royal Commission agrees these facts are true.

And the Queensland government agrees too.

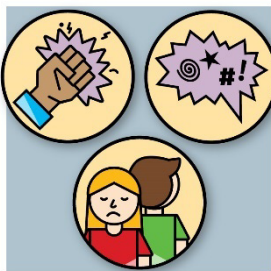
What were our findings?



Our **findings** are the things we believe are true after we hear evidence.

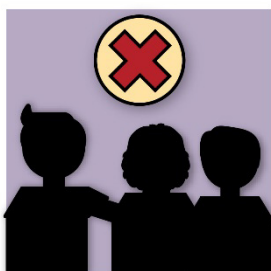
What Kaleb and Jonathon experienced

The agreed facts included evidence of:



- violence
- abuse
- neglect, including the neglect of Kaleb and Jonathon's rights as human beings.

These experiences happened for many reasons.

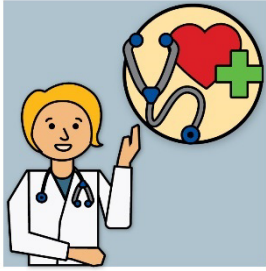


This included because Kaleb and Jonathon's parents could not provide them with the care and support they needed.



It also happened because Kaleb and Jonathon did not get the care and support they needed in the community.

They also needed:



- medical support



- disability support.

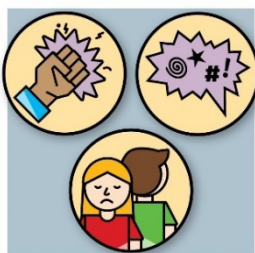


But they could not get these supports often enough.
Or in the ways they needed.



There was evidence about these experiences
from when Kaleb and Jonathon were born until
their dad died.

Our finding



We believe that Kaleb and Jonathon did experience:

- violence
- abuse
- neglect, including the neglect of their rights as human beings.



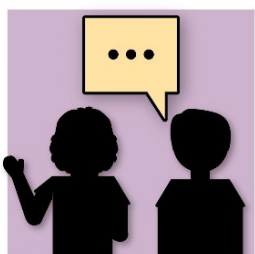
These experiences happened in the care of their dad.

And they happened between 2000 and 27 May 2020.



Kaleb and Jonathon should have been able to:

- have people respect them the same way they respect other people

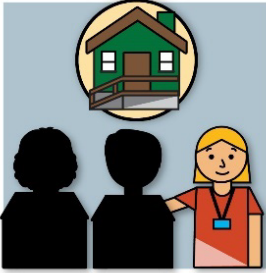


- have their say about how they live their life

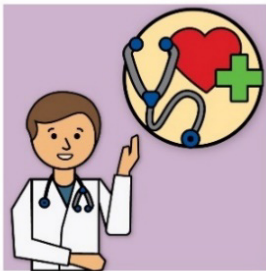


- have what they needed to live their life – including food, clothes and good housing.

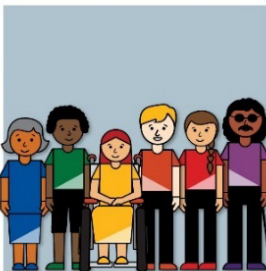
They should also have been able to get support:



- in their home

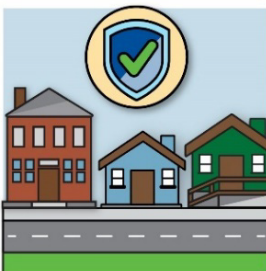


- for their health



- to take part in the community.

And they should have been able to have:



- a safe place to live



- somewhere to play.

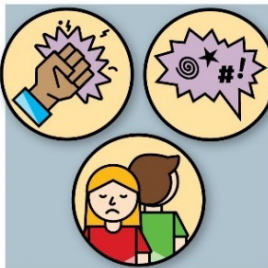
Protecting Kaleb and Jonathon



We looked into why Kaleb and Jonathon had these experiences.

We wanted to know if there were ways people could've stopped these things from happening.

Our finding



We believe that there is no reason why Kaleb and Jonathon should have had to experience:

- violence
- abuse
- neglect, including the neglect of their rights as human beings.

Contact with the Queensland government



Different parts of the Queensland government had contact with Kaleb and Jonathon.



The Queensland government knew that Kaleb and Jonathon were at risk of:

- violence
- abuse
- neglect.

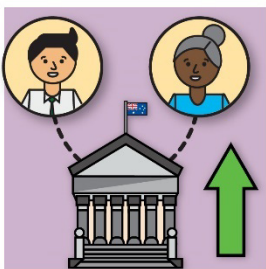


There were times when the government tried to protect Kaleb and Jonathon.

Our finding



We believe that the Queensland government had the opportunity to protect Kaleb and Jonathon.



Queensland government departments and agencies:

- could have done more
- should have done more.

What do we recommend?

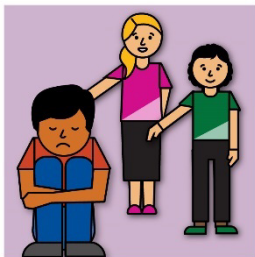


When we recommend something, we say how to make things better.

More training

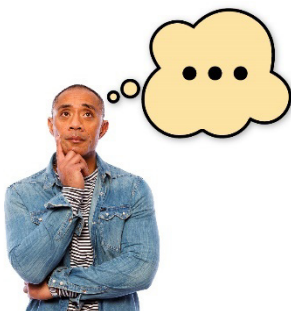


We recommend that the Queensland government should provide training for any staff who help support children and young people with disability.



This includes training about how **discrimination** happens.

Discrimination is when someone treats you unfairly because of a part of who you are.



It also includes how **attitudes** can affect the support children with disability get.

Your attitude is what you think, feel and believe.

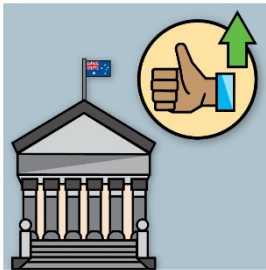
Improving the child protection system



The **child protection** system helps children stay safe.

The government runs the child protection system.

We just call it child protection.



We recommend that the Queensland government starts improving child protection now.



They can do this by listening to what people with disability want from child protection.



They should focus on making sure people with disability can have their say about decisions that affect children and young people with disability.

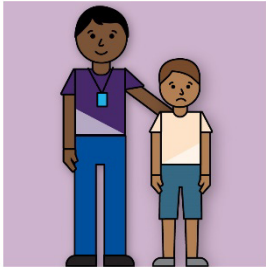


And making sure they can have their say about child protection **policies**.

Policies are:

- government plans for how to do things
- where rules come from.

And how child protection supports children with disability when they experience:



- violence
- abuse
- neglect
- exploitation.

Who must tell the police about children at risk



There is a law in Queensland called the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

We just call it the Act.



The Act explains how to keep children safe.

It sets the rules everyone must follow.

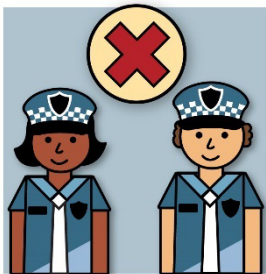


There are rules that say some people must tell the government if they:

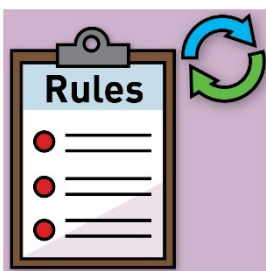
- know a child is not safe
- think a child might not be safe.



The rules include some police officers in Queensland.



But the rules don't include all police officers in Queensland.



We recommend the Queensland government think about changing the rules in the Act.



They should think about including **all** police officers in the rules.



If they decide the rules should not include all police officers, they should explain why.

Advocates



An **advocate** is someone who can:

- support you
- help you have your say
- give you information and advice.

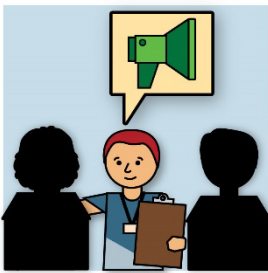


The Queensland government provides advocates to support children in child protection.



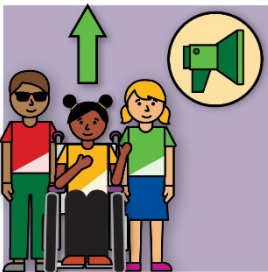
Kaleb and Jonathon had some contact with child protection.

But they did not have an advocate.



An advocate could have helped Kaleb and Jonathon speak up about:

- what they were experiencing
- what support they needed.

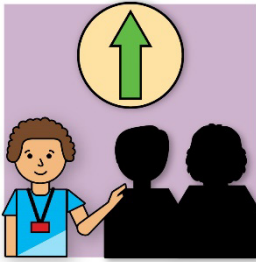


We recommend the Queensland government make sure more children can use advocates.

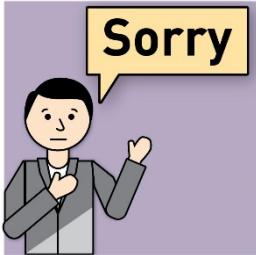


This includes children who are at risk of going into child protection.

What the Queensland government should do

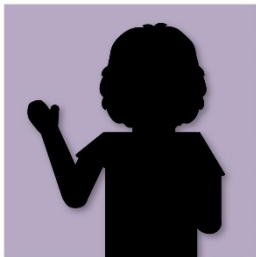


We recommend that the Queensland government should admit they could have done more to protect Kaleb and Jonathon.

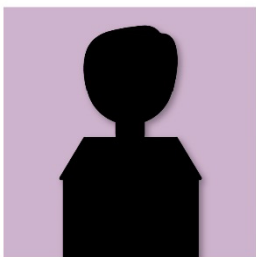


They should say sorry that the government did not do more to protect them.

We also recommend that the Queensland government **reviews** the parts of the government that had contact with:



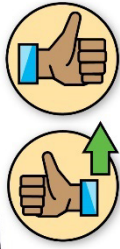
- Kaleb



- Jonathon



- Paul Barrett.



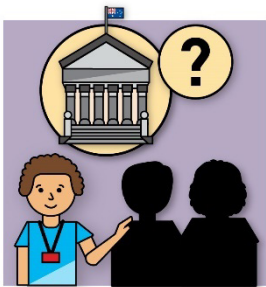
When you review something, you check to see what:

- works well
- needs to be better.

They should focus on what each part of the government did after Kaleb and Jonathon experienced:



- violence
- abuse
- neglect, including the neglect of their rights as human beings.



They should also focus on what each part of the government could and should have done to protect Kaleb and Jonathon.



They should also focus on how well policies work to protect children with disability from these experiences.



We recommend the Queensland government do this as soon as they can.



We also recommend the Queensland government share what they find out with the community.

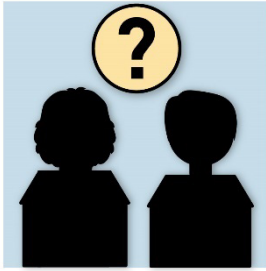


This includes publishing the information in an **accessible** way.



When information is accessible, it is easy to:

- find and use
- understand.



We recommend the Queensland government think about what they can do to help Kaleb and Jonathon now.



This might include providing more supports for Kaleb and Jonathon:

- now
- in the future.

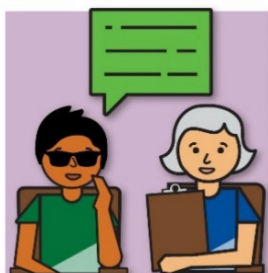
We call this 'redress'.

Closing comments

We want to thank everyone who:



- took part in Public hearing 33

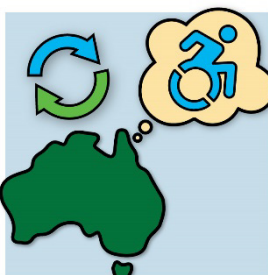


- shared their story with us.



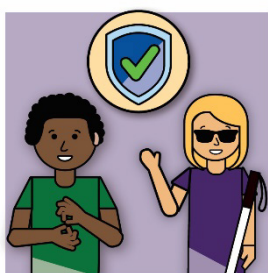
The royal commission is almost finished.

We will share our *Final report* on 29 September 2023.



In the *Final report* we recommend changing some big parts of how Australia:

- works
- thinks about disability.



We recommend **222** ways to keep people with disability safe.

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this report mean.



Abuse

Abuse is when someone treats you badly



Accessible

When information is accessible, it is easy to:

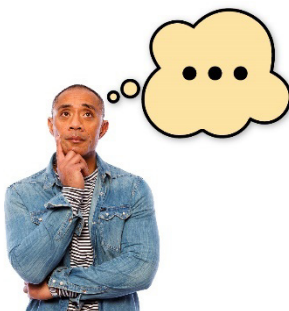
- find and use
- understand.



Advocate

An advocate is someone who can:

- support you
- help you have your say
- give you information and advice.



Attitude

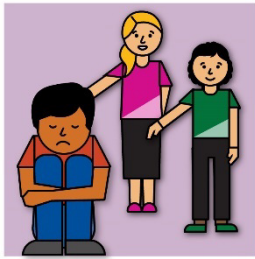
Your attitude is what you think, feel and believe.



Child protection

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The government runs the child protection system.



Discrimination

Discrimination is when someone treats you unfairly because of a part of who you are.



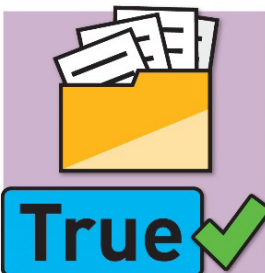
Evidence

When you give evidence, you talk about your experience.



Exploitation

Exploitation is when someone takes advantage of you.



Findings

Our findings are the things we believe are true after we hear evidence.



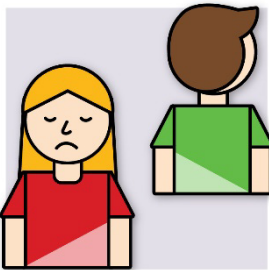
Formal

When something is formal, there are strict rules about how it should be done.



Hearing

A hearing is a formal, public meeting.



Neglect

Neglect is when someone is not helping you the way they are supposed to help you.



Policies

Policies are:

- government plans for how to do things
- where rules come from.



Provider

A provider supports people by delivering a service.

Public



When something is public:

- anyone can watch
- we share the records of what happened so anyone can read them.

Review



When you review something, you check to see what:

- works well
- needs to be better.



Rights

Rights are rules that say you can choose how you live your own life.

And they explain how other people must treat you.

Royal commission

A royal commission is how the government looks into a big problem.

It helps us find out:

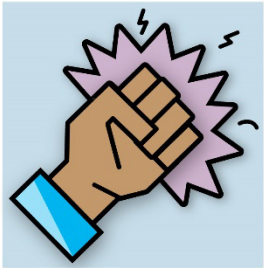
- what went wrong
- how it can be fixed.





Summary

A summary only includes the most important ideas.



Violence

Violence is when someone hurts you physically.



Witness

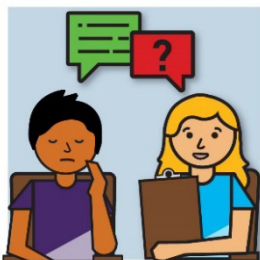
A witness is a person who:

- had an experience
- saw or knew that something happened.

Support for you



Blue Knot Foundation offers free **counselling support** to anyone who needs it.



Counselling support is when you:

- talk to someone about how you think and feel
- talk about ways to help you feel better.



You can call Blue Knot Foundation.

1800 421 468



They are open every day.



You can send Blue Knot Foundation an email.

helpline@blueknot.org.au

Contact us



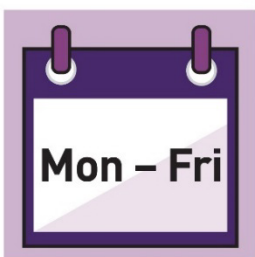
You can send us an email.

DRCenquiries@royalcommission.gov.au

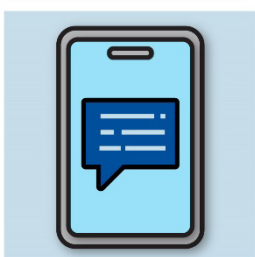


You can call us.

1800 517 199



We are available Monday to Friday.

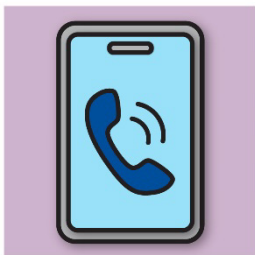


You can also send us a text message.

0459 906 629



We are not available on public holidays.



You can also call the National Relay Service.

133 677



You can write to us at:

GPO Box 1422

Brisbane

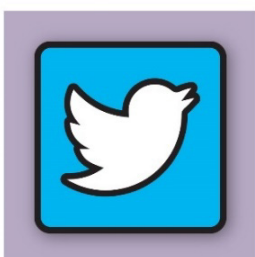
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