

PROVIDING INFORMATION TO THE FORUM

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Released 21 October 2025

This document explains how the Forum for Truth and Recognition (**Forum**) will treat the information provided to it. This includes information that is provided by telephone, email, written submission or in other formats to the Forum, the Chair and Forum staff.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION PROVIDED?

The Forum will keep records of the information it receives. The type of record kept will depend on how the information is provided. For example, it may be kept in the form of summary notes, an audio recording or a document.

Information provided to the Forum may be used to inform its work or made public. This means some information may be uploaded to the Forum's website, made available for review at the Forum's office and referenced or included in the Forum's report.

CAN INFORMATION BE PROVIDED ANONYMOUSLY?

Yes, you can request to provide information anonymously or use a pseudonym (a made-up name). The Forum will keep a record of your identity, but it will not name or identify you as being the source of the information that it decides to make public (including in its report).

CAN INFORMATION BE PROVIDED CONFIDENTIALLY?

Yes, you can request to provide some or all your information confidentially. While your information will generally inform the Forum's work, it will not publish or quote the confidential information (including in its report).

The Forum may still be required to disclose confidential information if it is required to do so by law (as discussed further below).

WHAT PROTECTIONS ARE AVAILABLE IF YOU PROVIDE INFORMATION?

If you provide information to the Forum, you have rights and protections under the *Inquiries Act 2014* (Vic) (the **Act**):

- **You have the protections of a witness in Supreme Court proceedings**
If you give information to the Forum, you have the same protection and immunity as a witness in Supreme Court proceedings (section 111(4) of the Act). This includes protection against being sued for defamation or negligence.
- **Your information cannot be used against you**
Any information you give to the Forum cannot be used as evidence or used against you in any other proceedings, subject to limited exceptions (section 112 of the Act).
- **Others cannot hinder or obstruct your participation in the Forum's proceedings**
It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly engage in conduct that hinders, obstructs or causes a serious disruption to the Forum's proceedings (section 119 of the Act).
- **Your employer cannot take detrimental action against you (including dismissing you)**
If you give information to the Forum without breaking the law, your employer cannot threaten or take detrimental action against you (including dismissing you) because you have given that information (section 121(1) of the Act).

You also have responsibilities in providing information to the Forum. It is an offence to make a statement or provide information to the Forum that is false or misleading (section 120 of the Act).

The Forum may request information that is relevant to its work. It will usually issue these requests in writing. The Forum cannot make you provide information. It is your choice if you provide any information and the Forum will respect your choice.

If you have information you want to provide to the Forum but are concerned about providing it, please contact the Forum to discuss your options on 1800 967 933 or email contact@truthandrecognition.vic.gov.au.

WHAT HAPPENS TO INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE?

To ensure that all information is properly considered, the Forum will keep records of all information that it receives. These records may include notes, audio recordings or copies of documents provided to it.

Sharing information with the public

The Forum may decide to publish some of the information that it receives, including uploading it to its website or referencing or including it in its report.

The Forum will generally not make public any names, addresses, schools, places of employment or information that identifies, or is likely to lead to the identification of a person.

If the Forum intends to publish information that it receives, it will generally seek to obtain consent in advance from the relevant participant.

Sharing information in specific circumstances

The Forum will seek to manage information that it receives in a way that appropriately protects those who provide it. There are, however, certain limited circumstances in which it may be necessary or appropriate for the Forum to share information with others.

Reporting abuse to Victoria Police

The *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) requires anyone aged 18 or older who reasonably believes that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child under the age of 16 by another person aged 18 or older to disclose it to a police officer as soon as it is practicable to do so (section 327(2)). This obligation only applies if the person who has experienced the abuse was aged less than 16 as of 27 October 2014 or subsequently if the offence was committed later.

This obligation is imposed on all members of the general public, including Forum staff.

A person does not, however, have to disclose it if they (among other reasons):

- have a 'reasonable excuse', for example if the person fears for another person's safety (other than the person believed to have committed the offence) if they were to disclose the information to police or the person believes that the information has already been disclosed to police by someone else and they have no further information to provide;
- received the information from the person who has experienced the abuse (directly or indirectly), they were aged 16 years or older at the time of providing the information, and have requested that the information not be disclosed;

- obtained the information when they were a child; or
- obtained the information solely through the public domain.

The Forum may be subject to other legal requirements to disclose information.

It may also be necessary or appropriate for the Forum to disclose information if there is a risk to the safety, health or wellbeing of another person.

The Forum will seek to consider the safety, health or wellbeing of people who have experienced child sexual abuse in schools and other persons who provide information to it. Generally, the Forum will not report abuse if it fears for another person's safety in doing so (other than the safety of the alleged perpetrator).

The Forum will seek to consult with people who choose to participate to confirm whether they want to report the abuse to a police officer. The Forum will seek to respect how people want information about the abuse to be managed or disclosed.

Disclosing information to other people

The Forum may disclose information which it receives to any person or body if it considers that the information is relevant to the performance of the functions of that person or body and it is appropriate to disclose that information (section 116(1) of the Act).

Before disclosing information, the Forum may redact or remove any names, addresses, schools, places of employment or information that identifies, or is likely to lead to the identification of a person who has experienced child sexual abuse.

The Forum will seek to respect how participants in the Forum want information about them to be managed or disclosed.

The information provided in this document is not legal advice. Please seek your own legal information if required.

Providing information to the Forum may be difficult, confronting and upsetting for some people. If you need to talk to someone, support is available from the services listed on the Forum's website.