

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Independent Review into Victorian Racing Industry Victim Support and Complaint Processes



Invitation to participate

You are invited to take part in an independent review into Victorian racing industry victim support and complaint processes (Review).

What is the Review about?

The Review was established following a joint referral by the three Victorian racing controlling bodies – Racing Victoria Limited, Harness Racing Victoria and Greyhound Racing Victoria – to the Racing Integrity Commissioner.

The Review establishes an opportunity for victims of physical and sexual abuse, physical and sexual assault and sexual harassment within the Victorian racing industry to report their experiences.

It will hear about the lived experiences and expectations of victims, inquire into systemic issues, and examine the industry's processes and systems to prevent and respond to abuse, assault and harassment, to ensure they are effective and appropriate.

The Review will also provide clear referral and access pathways to counselling and other supports for all who need it, including specialist trauma counselling, and to law enforcement and other agencies, as appropriate for those who seek it.

The aim of the Review is to ensure that worker wellbeing is at the forefront of the Victorian racing industry. It will not investigate or make findings about individual allegations of physical and sexual abuse, physical and sexual assault and sexual harassment.

Who is conducting the Review?

The Review is being conducted by the Racing Integrity Commissioner who is supported by a dedicated Review team of suitably experienced and qualified experts to ensure it is conducted with the required sensitivity, confidentiality and independence.

Do I have to be involved?

Participation in the Review is voluntary. If you do not want to take part, you do not have to.

Who can participate?

To take part in the Review, you must be aged 18 years or older and fall within at least one of the following categories:

- people who work* or have previously worked in thoroughbred, harness or greyhound racing in Victoria
- people who volunteer or have previously volunteered in thoroughbred, harness or greyhound racing in Victoria
- organisations and experts that have direct experience or expertise in areas under the Review.

**Note: the term 'work' is broad and is intended to include anyone engaging in paid and unpaid work, such as employees, contractors and subcontractors (and employees of contractors and subcontractors), labour hire workers, apprentices and trainees, students, interns and volunteers.*

How do I take part?

There are different ways to participate in the Review. You can contribute by:

- completing an online survey
- making a written submission, and/or
- participating in an in-person or online interview.

To be involved in the Review, you will need to give your consent by completing the attached *Participant Consent Form*.

What is involved?

If you choose to participate, the Review team will ask you questions based on the Terms of Reference for the Review, including about:

- your experience in the Victorian racing industry
- your experience of physical and sexual abuse, assault and harassment in Victorian racing industry workplaces, including if you have witnessed these behaviours or have knowledge of them occurring in the Victorian racing industry

- your knowledge of relevant industry policies, practices and processes
- your insights about the culture of the Victorian racing industry generally and any suggestions you have about how the industry can improve its response to dealing with allegations of abuse, assault and harassment.

The Review team is interested in hearing about both positive and negative experiences.

It is your choice to share as much or as little of your knowledge and experiences as you want. You can also share your experiences with the Review even if you are not sure that your experience is abuse, assault or harassment.

Participating in the Review will not involve you having to substantiate or prove what happened to you – you have the right to share your experiences and be believed.

Survey

As part of evidence gathering for the Review, the Commissioner will administer a survey to seek specific data about the prevalence of physical and sexual abuse, physical and sexual assault and sexual harassment in the Victorian racing industry, and levels of reporting of these behaviours.

The survey is confidential and can be anonymous. It is not compulsory or a pre-condition to participation in an interview or making a written submission. The results of the survey will be included in the final report of the Review.

Interview

The Review team will conduct confidential interviews. Wherever possible, interviews will be in person. However, if factors such as covid-19, medical reasons or your own preferences mean that we need to conduct interviews remotely by video conference, we can arrange that.

Format, recording and purpose of interviews

An interview will involve a Review team member asking you questions about your experience. The Review team will request your consent to be interviewed before your interview begins.

Interviews will be recorded with your permission. If you do not want the interview to be recorded, you can let the Review team know and written notes will be taken instead.

The Review team will transcribe your interview recording so that we have an accurate account of the information you share. All transcripts will be kept confidential. Please let the Review team know before the interview if you do not want the interview to be recorded and transcribed. The Review team will use your information to shape the findings and recommendations of the Review, including the final report.

Interview support

You can bring a support person with you to the interview. That can be a friend, family member or anyone you think may be of support to you. You will need to tell us before the interview who that person is.

If you would like a counsellor or psychologist to be present at the interview, then the Review team can arrange for that, at no cost to you.

Interview locations and booking

Interviews will take place in person in convenient metropolitan and regional locations, or via video or telephone conferencing facilities, depending on the preference of the individual.

Written submission

You can also share your experiences by making a written submission to the Review.

Your submission can be as long or as short as you like, and we are interested in hearing about both the positive and negative experiences. Below are a few questions as a guide:

- Tell us about yourself, your involvement in the Victorian racing industry, and the areas you have worked in.
- What you would like to confidentially share about your lived experience of physical and sexual abuse, physical and sexual assault and sexual harassment while working in the Victorian racing industry.

- Your awareness of Victorian racing industry workplace policies and complaints mechanisms and their effectiveness.
- Any changes that the Victorian racing industry could make to ensure it is a safe and respectful working environment.
- Any other comments you would like to share.

Please note that by providing a written submission you are **not** making a complaint or report.

You can make a submission by emailing review@racingintegrity.vic.gov.au or mailing:

Review at Racing Integrity Commissioner
GPO Box 24034
Melbourne VIC 3000

How will my privacy and personal information be protected?

Personal information

By giving your consent to participating in the Review, you agree to the Review team collecting and using the information you provide for the purposes of the Review.

The information you share with us, including your name and personal information, will be treated confidentially by the Review team. Your name and other personal or identifying information will not be published.

The Racing Integrity Commissioner will produce a public report on the findings and recommendations of the Review. These will be aimed at ensuring the Victorian racing industry is free from abuse, assault and harassment, and a safe and respectful place to work.

The information you provide to the Review may be drawn upon, quoted or referred to in the final report and other resources produced by the Commissioner in connection with the Review, but will not be attributed to you, and will not be used if its use could identify you or others. These document and materials will be published on the Commissioner's website.

The Review team is committed to keeping secure the information you provide us and we will take all reasonable precautions to protect your personal information from unauthorised access, loss, misuse, or alteration in accordance with our obligations under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and the *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic). Personal information held by us is protected by several physical and electronic safeguards including restricted access to storage areas and computer databases.

Reporting obligations

In certain circumstances, the Review team may be required to disclose what you tell us if:

- there is a legal obligation to do so, for example in relation to mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse
- concerned about the immediate safety and risk of harm to you, or someone else
- a court order requires it.

The Review team may also be required to report to relevant authorities in other limited circumstances

If the possibility of disclosure worries you, then you can provide an anonymous submission through the confidential Review Survey.

How do I access support and assistance or participate in the Review?

If you want to be involved in the Review and–

- would like to discuss how we can support your involvement by providing appropriate supports and/or adjustments
- want to complete the survey, book in for an interview and/or make a written submission
- need help to complete the survey or make a written submission
- want to access support or counselling
- need help to report what happened to you to the police or other appropriate authority–

please contact the Review team via our dedicated hotline on **1300 896 049** or email review@racingintegrity.vic.gov.au.

The Review team includes expert counsellors and psychologists who can offer you support throughout the process, and access and referral to ongoing support and specialist counselling. A list of other services that provide counselling and support is available below.

Where to get other support

If your situation is urgent

If you or anyone you know is in immediate danger, or a crime is currently occurring, please call police on Triple Zero (000) or contact [your local police station](#).

Report a criminal offence

For non-urgent matters, you can report a crime by contacting the Police Assistance Line on 131 444 or, if you wish to remain anonymous, contact [Crime Stoppers](#) on 1800 333 000.

Sexual assault, harassment and violence support services

1800 Respect

A confidential counselling, information and support service that operates 24-hours a day, 7 days a week for people who have experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment

Ph: 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)

Website: <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

Sexual Assault Crisis Line

Crisis Line: 1800 806 292 (free call)

Email: ahcasa@thewomens.org.au

Website: www.sacl.com.au

CASA

Website: www.casa.org.au for a list of Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault

Mental health support services

Lifeline

24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention

Ph: 13 11 14

Website: <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

beyondblue

Mental health support

Ph: 1300 224 636

Website: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Headspace

Supports young people aged between 12 and 25 years of age

Ph: 1800 650890

Website: <https://headspace.org.au/>

Kids Helpline

Counselling service for those aged between 5 and 25 years of age

Ph: 1800 55 1800

Website: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

Suicide Call Back Service

Ph: 1300 659 467

Website: <https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/>

This Review is being conducted under Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee approval. If you have any concerns about the Review, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne VIC 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781/4461, or you can raise your concerns with a Review team member.