

IN GOOD FAITH FOUNDATION

Our Vision

To achieve justice, recovery, and ongoing support; promoting the well-being of Survivors, families and communities impacted by institutional abuse.

Our Mission

- To ensure acknowledgement of harms done
- To provide wrap-around care and support to existing Survivors, families and communities
- To strive for a world free of institutional abuse

Our Work

The work of In Good Faith Foundation is underpinned by our commitment to no further harm to individuals, families and communities by being a source of help that will resource them to access the health care they need and establish hope in a recovery journey.

Our organisation

In Good Faith Foundation (IGFF) is a national charity and Redress Support Service working with and on behalf of institutional abuse survivors, their families, carers and communities. Our case management and advocacy services provide wrap around support to individuals, assisting them to voice their concerns and sustaining them as they navigate justice, redress and recovery pathways. We also undertake systemic advocacy focused on prevention of future abuses and promote methodologies for improving survivors' wellbeing and their access to justice.

The work of IGFF is informed by advocacy and support services provided throughout the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations (2012-2013); the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2013-2017); and national support service input to the establishment of the National Redress Scheme (July 2018 ongoing). We also facilitate a community development forum called The Melbourne Victims' Collective that has been meeting for 14 years focused on strategic information and education sharing for survivors, their carers and support professionals such as advocates, therapeutic care, law and justice representatives.

Key Client Demographics

Over 80% of IGFF's national client base reports living with an associated mental health illness often compounded by one or more physical disabilities or chronic illnesses. (A detailed submission was provided to the Productivity Commission and to the Victorian Mental Health Care Royal Commission and can be provided on request.) During 2019-2020, referrals to IGFF included

high needs disability care survivors, family members and carers, and survivors from a range of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (born both overseas and in Australia).

For many survivors seeking information and support to engage with the National Redress Scheme, their initial phone calls are first “disclosures” of historical childhood sexual abuse, requiring expert and individualised support on demand. Our service model ensures that there is wrap-around care for these individuals as they seek to engage in a redress or justice pathway.

These survivors require us to arrange a match between their needs (stemming from the impacts of trauma) and tailored support to meet those needs, through access to appropriate and accessible service providers. Increasingly, these survivors are presenting with complex and associated case matters that require careful, trauma-aware management such as drug and alcohol abuse impacting family relationships; mental health breakdown; unemployment, food insecurity and housing crises.

We observe that survivors coming forward for Redress information proceed to describing complex life issues that require supported access to appropriate services and require sustained support there are no quick fixes. The multiplicity of complicating and co-morbid factors means that a significant amount of work is provided as advocacy; linking survivors (and often family members) to external support services specialising in Alcohol and Other Drugs support; Gambling; Family Violence; Mental Health Crisis support and intervention; Homelessness; Community Health Organisations; Aged Care and Disability services and LGBTIQ+ support and information, prior to them accessing justice and redress pathways.

In contrast to initial disclosures, survivors who previously engaged with the Royal Commission and other Inquiries may already be linked to a support service such as IGFF, greatly benefitting from professional networks established during these Government initiatives, regular network meetings and key understandings forged between specialising support services, longer-term staff and clientele’s sense of belonging to a Survivors’ community.

Critically, IGFF works to empower our survivor clients and put in place support structures that will enable them to endure the stressors in whatever redress pathway they choose to embark upon. An IGFF Caseworker advocates for the client and liaises across relevant support networks prior to their commencing on a redress path. That Caseworker continues to support them throughout the course of their redress process (and beyond), to support their wellbeing and psychological safety.

As a priority, the mental and physical health and stability of an individual must be ensured to safeguard against engaging in processes that would not be beneficial to survivors and also to guarantee that an individual has had all of their justice and redress options explained to them (sometimes multiple times) and is able to provide informed consent prior to engaging with those processes.

When providing such a comprehensive care model, IGFF focusses on collaborative advocacy ensuring the client's voice remains central to their tailored processes; empowering clients to take an active role in their recovery journey and facilitating a model of support that links a survivor to a connected community.

IGFF referrals, advocacy and liaison may include a number of the following options:

- National Redress Scheme Support Services (local, state and national providers including prev. Royal Commission supports)
- 24/7 phone and online counselling for critical out of hours support access
- Knowmore legal advice and financial counselling for the National Redress Scheme (and prev. Royal Commission)
- My Aged Care, Aged Care and NDIS disability support providers, coordinators, and advocates
- Local Council Community Support Providers
- Community Health Centres and similar organisations
- Psychological and Psychiatric Community Health Centres
- Private Psychological and Psychiatric practitioners experienced in institutional abuse trauma
- Housing Support Services and Case Managers; Crisis and supported accommodation
- Family violence support services, counselling, and crisis management
- Drug and Alcohol support, information, assessment, and treatment services
- Social Work and Community support workers responding to institutional abuse clients
- Justice providers such as Taskforce SANO; local SOCITs; Police; Court Support Workers; OPP lawyers
- Legal advice providers demonstrating experience and integrity for institutional abuse cases
- Victims of Crime Victoria, New South Wales Victims Services and Other State Providers
- Practical welfare charities and local community supports to help clients with bills, pet costs, furniture, clothing, transport and food crisis and recurring needs