

1. The submission points out that the lower-than-expected uptake for redress by both Indigenous people and people with disabilities is due to low awareness of the Scheme. According to evidence given on July 7, referrals for Micah Projects are largely word of mouth. Despite this, there is a waitlist of months before support with an application can be provided.

- a. **How much does the wait time impact on an applicant's decision whether to proceed or not – do many clients completely withdraw from the application process once they are informed of the waiting period?**

Inevitably some people have decided to withdraw from receiving support from the service. It may be that a potential applicant has approached another Redress Support Service, decided to apply on their own, have decided to pursue an alternative pathway i.e., Civil Litigation of Church based complaints processes. We have experienced a loss of contact when an individual has moved or changed contact details during the waiting period. There have been examples where an individual has passed away prior to receiving support. This outcome has not been common however as it is the practice of Micah Projects to triage and prioritise those with significant health needs. The majority of enquires though tend to continue to choose to receive support and it is believed this is a result of the 'word of mouth' referral process.

- b. **Does Micah Projects have a sense of the increase in numbers that might be anticipated if awareness were increased to reach all potential applicants, as well as how this might affect wait times under current resource levels?**

Not specific figures. Micah Projects would likely rely on the preliminary modelling conducted by DSS but we continue to provide anecdotal evidence that there are many individuals who are likely to be eligible to apply who are not being provided accurate information. Micah Projects Redress support service has seen an increase of two additional staff since the inception of The Scheme. Instead of seeing a reduction, our waitlist has increased as more people are made aware of the availability of support through word-of-mouth.

- c. **Many clients of Micah who were applying for the disability royal commission were unaware of the NRS, and that they could potentially make a claim for redress. Does Micah have an opinion as to why awareness would appear to be higher for the disability royal commission?**

The simple answer is that Micah's Disability Royal Commission support service designed a deliberate strategy to conduct regional forums, in partnership with Your Story Disability Legal Support Service, to engage with regional communities. Micah Projects also partnered with local services to provide counselling and submission support to those living in regional areas. The grassroots approach to dissemination of information regarding the Commission is what has made the difference. Unfortunately, Micah Projects Redress support service has not been funded to conduct the same level of community engagement.

2. In the evidence given on July 7, Mr Orr stated that "we have a high level of confidence in submitting an application that the application will likely lead to an outcome".

- a. **Is the financial outcome amount (where applicable) in line with expectations based upon the assessment matrix, or are there inconsistencies here?**

To clarify, the confidence relates to payments associated with the categories of abuse. When it comes to eligibility for the Extreme Circumstances component there is a high level of unpredictability. The inability for any applicant to understand the eligibility of Extreme

Circumstances is highly problematic and can create distressing outcomes when what can feel as though an arbitrary decision has been made on what is defined as extreme.

3. In the evidence given on July 7, question 44 of the application was highlighted as being particularly traumatic for many people. It was suggested that a simpler approach be adopted, citing the Payment Scheme for British Child Migrants as an example.

- a. **Given that the British Scheme differed from the NRS in that it was not about abuse, is it not appropriate that this difficult question is included in the application as it goes to the heart of what redress is about?**

I would disagree that the Child Migrant Scheme was not, in part, an acknowledgment of the abuses experienced by British Child Migrants. Not unlike the National Redress Scheme the British Scheme was a product of Government enquiries, witness testimony and institutional acknowledgement of liability. People did not need to retell their stories of abuse and mistreatment as they had already done so. The same can be said for the evidence provided by victims to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. I would argue that at the heart of the National Redress Scheme is a commitment to victims that they are believed and there is acknowledgement of institutional failures. The requirement to disclose the incidents of sexual abuse feels like a need to provide proof. That one category of abuse should carry a higher level of monetary acknowledgement than another ignores the complexity of sexual abuse.

- b. **How should question 44 be improved to reduce trauma? For example, would a tick box approach be suitable, or would this introduce other problems?**

There is no doubt that there will be applicants who would choose to disclose their sexual abuse. Some may consider this cathartic and a necessary advocacy or healing process. There are many, many others however who report that the need to disclose creates more harm than good. If we accept, based on the thousands of submissions to the Royal Commission, that sexual abuse was rampant within the participating institutions why is it necessary to detail the abuse? An option to disclose or not would be a far more, survivor friendly, approach which would give people agency over their history.

4. The submission talks about claim farming, with some survivor advocacy groups directing potential applicants to legal firms rather than government funded support or legal services.
  - a. **Given that legislation was introduced into QLD last July making it an offence to engage in claim farming practices, has Micah seen any evidence that this legislation has been effective or has there been no change?**

Micah Projects is not in a position to provide any specific information regarding claim farming processes. All Micah Projects support applicants are encouraged to receive preliminary legal advice from Knowmore who will then refer to civil firms who are assessed and monitored against a rigid framework. Furthermore, Micah Projects does not have a strong presence in a number of vulnerable areas, such as prisons or remote First Nations communities, where these stories seem to persist.

- b. **Are there any specific legal firms or advocacy groups engaging in claim farming practices that Micah is aware of?**

As above.

- c. **If so, has Micah reported the legal firms or advocacy groups to the relevant authorities in QLD and what has been the response?**

