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To Whom It May Concern,

**Submission regarding the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Bill 2018 and the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2018**

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) welcomes the opportunity to make a brief submission in response to the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Bill 2018 and related Bill.

The [APS welcomed the recommendations](#) of the Royal Commission when the final report was released in December 2017. At the time, the APS urged that the important and thorough work of the Commission be followed by a firm commitment to fund the recommendations to ensure that those who were sexually abused as children in Australian institutions are fully supported and that future generations are better protected.

The APS also acknowledged the bravery of those victims who felt able to speak on behalf of the thousands of Australians who experienced sexual abuse in institutional contexts and live with the legacy today. Psychologists are all too aware of the consequences of such abuses.

As stated in the explanatory memorandum to the Bill, "redress under the Scheme consists of a monetary payment of up to \$150,000 as a tangible means of recognising the wrong survivors have suffered, access to counselling and psychological services (either through a lump sum payment or through state or territory based services) and the option to receive a direct personal response from a responsible institution(s)". This Scheme will present an important step on the healing journey for many survivors, but it falls short of the \$200,000 cap recommended by the Royal Commission.

Furthermore, the APS is concerned about the limitations imposed on access to counselling and psychological services. If a survivor lives in a jurisdiction that is a declared provider of counselling and psychological services under the Scheme, then they will be entitled to access those services across the lifetime of the Scheme (i.e. 10 years). If a survivor lives in a jurisdiction that is not a declared provider of counselling and psychological services under the Scheme, access to counselling and psychological will be capped at \$5,000. This provision falls short of the Commission's recommendation that survivors should have access to counselling and psychological services across their lifetime.

It is also noted that people who have a serious criminal conviction must undergo a special assessment to confirm eligibility to the Redress Scheme. The stated rationale for this is to ensure that the Scheme is not brought into disrepute and public confidence in the Scheme is not jeopardised. But this potential ineligibility is concerning given that the reason for incarceration was likely related to a person's experience of abuse, and moreover given that access to appropriate redress, including psychological counselling, might be expected to contribute to their rehabilitation, which is in the whole community's interest.

In many cases access to the Scheme will need to be extended to survivors' families, who are often seriously affected by the ongoing impacts of this abuse, sometimes across generations.

The related Consequential Amendments Bill will ensure that payments are not income tested, and hence will not reduce the income support payments of survivors as a consequence of receiving a payment under the Scheme. This is fully supported by the APS.

In conclusion, the APS confirms its endorsement of the Royal Commission's process and expects its recommendations to be implemented in full, to keep faith with those who were abused in institutions under our collective watch.

For further information about our submission please contact Dr Louise Roufeil directly

Yours sincerely,

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