



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee report:

Inquiry into the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Bill 2018
[Provisions] and the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse
(Consequential Amendments) Bill 2018 [Provisions]

July 2018

Introduction

The Australian Government welcomes the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee's (the Committee's) report to the Inquiry into 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 bills establish a National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse (the Scheme). Subject to the passage of legislation, the Scheme will start on 1 July 2018 and will run for 10 years. The Scheme will provide three components of redress:

- Access to psychological counselling
- A monetary payment
- A direct personal response, such as an apology, from the responsible institution for those who request it.

The Scheme will provide redress to survivors who were sexually abused as children before the commencement of the Scheme in an institution that is participating in the Scheme.

The Scheme is being established to recognise and alleviate the impact of past institutional child sexual abuse. The scope of the Scheme mirrors that of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Royal Commission underlined the need to provide avenues for survivors to obtain effective redress for this past abuse as many survivors take years, even decades, to disclose their experiences of child sexual abuse. The Scheme will offer the majority of survivors an alternative to civil litigation, with a lower evidentiary burden and a high level of discretion.

In addition to the Commonwealth Government, all state and territory governments have committed to join the Scheme. The Commonwealth Government also welcomes the announcement from six major non-government institutions to join the Scheme, including the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Salvation Army, the YMCA, Scouts Australia and the Uniting Church.

The Government acknowledges that persons who have experienced child sexual abuse have waited a long time for justice. The Government is pleased that the Committee recommends the bills be passed so survivors can then begin accessing redress.

Inquiry into 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

Recommendation made by Labor Senators

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That current and future Governments continue to negotiate with States and Territories in good faith to continue to strengthen the Redress Scheme. |
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Supported

The Commonwealth Government supports this recommendation. Current and future governments will be able to negotiate with states and territories through formal governance arrangements and mandated reviews of the Scheme.

The Ministers' Redress Scheme Governance Board will be established from the Scheme's commencement to assist the proper, efficient and effective performance of the Scheme.

The Board will consist of the Commonwealth Minister for Social Services and other state and territory ministers from participating jurisdictions responsible for redress.

In addition, the Scheme's legislation includes a requirement for the Minister for Social Services to conduct a review of the operation of the Scheme two and eight years after its commencement. Both reviews must consider a number of matters, including views of key stakeholders such as the state and territory governments participating in the Scheme.