

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2017-18 Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 2.1 Families and Communities

Question No: SQ17-000529

Topic: Redress

Hansard page: Written

Senator Louise Pratt asked:

- 1) How was the \$33.4 million figure announced in the budget decided on?
- 2) What modelling is this figure based on?
- 3) What will the \$33.4 million be spent on specifically?
- 4) How many States and Territories have indicated that they will opt in to the scheme?
- 5) What details have been provided to the States and Territories about the proposed national redress scheme?
- 6) How will the scheme be administered?
- 7) How much funding will be contributed to implementing the scheme?
- 8) What type of abuse will be covered?
- 9) Will the federal government be taking responsibility as funder of last resort or will survivors from states/organisations be unable to receive redress?
- 10) Why hasn't the federal government complied with the timeframe recommended by the royal commission to establish and implement the scheme in the first half of this year instead of 2018?

Answer:

- 1) The \$33.4 million announced in the Budget will be allocated in 2017/18 to establish the Commonwealth Redress Scheme (the Scheme). The figure was determined following internal Commonwealth costings of the work required to establish the Scheme and continue funding the Royal Commission support services operating in each state and territory.
- 2) The figure is based on detailed costings by Commonwealth agencies with responsibility for establishing the Scheme, including the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Department of Health (DoH) and the Attorney-General's Department (AGD).
- 3) See 1.
- 4) States and territories are working with the Commonwealth to settle key design issues ahead of deciding whether to opt into the Scheme.
- 5) The Commonwealth has provided states and territories with as much information as possible about the Scheme. Engagement is occurring at the ministerial-level through the Law, Crime and Community Safety Council, and regularly at the official level through the Redress Inter Jurisdictional Committee. Consultation with the states and territories has included seeking their views on the design, implementation and legislative aspects of the Commonwealth Scheme.

- 6) DSS will continue to have policy responsibility for the Scheme, as well as responsibility for delivering the community based support services. DHS will deliver the majority of the Scheme's components, including receiving and assessing applications for redress, and making monetary payments to eligible survivors. DoH will be responsible for the psychological counselling component of the Scheme. AGD will be responsible for the legal support services, including providing survivors with access to legal advice prior to signing a deed of release to ensure they understand any implications for their future rights before doing so.
- 7) Funding beyond 2017/18 is subject to further decisions of Government.
- 8) The Scheme will be available to eligible survivors who suffered sexual abuse as a child in Commonwealth institutional settings prior to 1 July 2018.
- 9) The Government is continuing discussions with key stakeholders including the states, territories and non-government institutions about the Royal Commission's recommendations in relation to funder of last resort.
- 10) The Royal Commission's report on Redress and Civil Litigation was received on 14 September 2015. Given the Commonwealth cannot compel states to take part in a national scheme, extensive consultation occurred with states and territories and non-government institutions throughout 2016, including consideration at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). On 4 November 2016, the Government announced the establishment of a Commonwealth Redress Scheme and an Independent Advisory Council on Redress on 16 December 2016. There has been considerable progress on the design of the Scheme in consultation with the Independent Advisory Council including an IT system, recruitment and training of staff, and the development of guidelines for a dedicated telephone helpline and website to be operational in March 2018 to support survivors to lodge applications from July 2018.