

Media Release

The Hon Jill Hennessey MP
Attorney-General



Monday, 30 November 2020

VICTORIA SUPPORTS NEW SANCTIONS FOR REDRESS SCHEME

The Andrews Labor Government welcomes the Commonwealth Government's plans to strip organisations of their charitable status if they fail to join the National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.

Attorney-General Jill Hennessey said the Labor Government had long advocated for additional sanctions and removal of this status – which will help ensure organisations take responsibility for the enormous harm they caused to children in their care.

Organisations are on notice right across Victoria – future state government funding will be at risk, if they fail to take steps to join the Scheme if they have been named in an application.

The Government also welcomes the release of the Commonwealth's first report on the Scheme's key performance indicators. While there is much room for improvement, these measures will increase accountability and transparency in the Scheme's operations.

However, the most important measure of all are the results which review a survivor's experience of the Scheme – which is why we urge the Commonwealth to finalise these results as soon as possible.

The second anniversary review of the National Redress Scheme is a significant opportunity to make genuine improvements to the operation of the Scheme.

In the submission to the review, the Government recommended removing the unfair practice of indexing prior payments received by survivors. The current indexation rules have been criticised by survivors and stakeholders as grossly unfair. The final redress payment is not indexed, so neither should relevant prior payments.

It's also crucial that the Scheme doesn't leave survivors with tiny payments after the effort and trauma endured in making an application – we need a minimum payment to ensure adequate compensation for everyone who is deemed eligible by the Scheme.

Victoria has suggested a minimum redress payment of \$10,000 – as recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. We also believe that any minimum payment should have retrospective effect.

We also recommended that the Scheme legislation should be amended to mandate participation for instances in which an organisation has been named in an application and can meet its obligations under the Scheme legislation.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jill Hennessey

"We owe survivors a world class redress Scheme – one that listens, learns and adapts, and one that holds the rights of survivors at its core – that is why we've called for important, urgent changes to be made."

"We know that indexing prior payments can be deflating and unfair for survivors – so we've recommended the review consider removing this, to level the playing field."

"Victoria welcomes the new sanctions – and we will continue to advocate for a simple, fast and trauma-informed pathway for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse to access redress."