

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Wednesday, 12 October 2022

PAST CARE LEAVERS: WE HEAR YOU

The Andrews Labor Government is acknowledging the trauma of historical abuse and neglect that too many Victorian children experienced while placed in institutional care.

The Government will establish a redress scheme, provide support and deliver a formal apology to Victorians who were placed in orphanages, children's homes and missions and experienced physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect.

The Government is investing \$2.9 million to co-design the scheme, which will include urgent hardship payments of up to \$10,000 for care leavers in exceptional circumstances.

The scheme covers the period between 1928 and 1990, when an estimated 90,000 children were placed in care because of economic stress, social disadvantage, being orphaned, having a single parent or parental mental illness.

The Government recognises many of these children – also known as Forgotten Australians – grew up not knowing their family, and their grief and trauma continues today, with many experiencing poverty, homelessness and mental illness as a result of the abuse they experienced.

The new scheme builds on support available through the National Redress Scheme set up after the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*. As part of a co-design process with care leavers, we will draw on the models of other similar schemes to ensure it is meaningful, healing and respectful.

Former Premier Steve Bracks issued a formal statement of acknowledgement and apology to the Forgotten Australians on behalf of the Victorian Government in 2006, while the National Apology in 2018 recognised victims and survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.

If the Government is re-elected, the Premier will make a formal apology in Parliament on the Government's behalf to survivors of all forms of abuse in institutional settings – bringing together these two previous apologies.

The Government has invested more than \$4 million in response to last year's *Parliamentary Inquiry into Historical Forced Adoption in Victoria*, including a plan to co-design and establish Australia's first redress scheme for people affected by forced adoption.

Consultation to co-design the scheme will be launched in coming months. For details, visit dffh.vic.gov.au.

Care leavers who need support can contact Care Leavers Australasia Network or Open Place. Crisis help can be found through Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Victorians who were subject to horrific abuse as vulnerable children have waited long enough for the respect and recognition of a redress scheme that has left them behind. Today, that changes."

"To these brave victim-survivors – we see you. We hear you. And we apologise for the profound trauma you have carried for too long."

Media contact: Jamila Fontana 0409 741 279 | jamila.fontana@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Child Protection and Family Services Colin Brooks

“For many, the grief and trauma experienced while placed in institutional care during this period continues today.”

“We can’t undo what was done, but we can recognise the harm caused, apologise and provide meaningful support.”