



MEDIA STATEMENT

United call for Urgent Action on Redress

Leading organisations working with child abuse victims appeal for National Scheme

Australia, 15 March 2016: A collective of leading organisations representing child abuse victims have come together today call on the Federal Government to show real leadership and announce its concrete commitment to a National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional childhood sexual abuse.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse report has strongly recommended that the optimal way to deliver equal, fair and just treatment to survivors is to establish a single National Redress Scheme, and that this should happen as soon as possible. The undersigned organisations are undivided in their support for a national scheme, as recommended by the Royal Commission.

President of Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA), Dr Cathy Kezelman AM, said: “We call on the Federal, State and Territory governments to work with institutions to deliver real justice and healing to Australian survivors as a matter of absolute priority. More than six months has passed since the redress report was delivered to the Government - it’s time for action.

“While successive governments have expressed their deep sympathy for survivors, they have only just commenced negotiations with the States and Territories. The bulk of survivor organisations support a single scheme which is ready to begin inviting and accepting applications from survivors within the timeframe recommended by the Commission, by no later than 1 July 2017.”

The Federal government is pursuing a state-based approach to redress rather than the Commission’s recommendation of a national redress scheme. Redress recognises the suffering experienced by survivors and is a critical component of the healing process.

Executive Officer of Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN), Leonie Sheedy, said: “The last thing Care Leavers need is another unfair system which does not address their chronically unmet needs. CLAN supports a National Independent Redress Scheme for survivors of all forms of abuse. We regard this as a critical issue of justice. We add our voice to the call for urgent action from the Federal Government.”

Chief Executive Officer of Truth, Justice and Healing Council, Francis Sullivan, said: “Australia needs an independent national redress scheme so that regardless of where or when a survivor was abused they have access to consistent, compassionate and generous redress. Where someone lives or where they were abused should not change how they are treated which will inevitable happen if all the states operate separate schemes.”



Chief Executive Officer of Australian Council of Social Service, Cassandra Goldie, agreed: “The correct action on this important issue can’t be delayed any longer. This is a significant social issue and addressing it demands strong leadership and real commitment from all of our elected representatives.”

The National Redress Scheme will achieve significant efficiencies in administration, be less complex for survivors and deliver consistent and fair access, as well as treatment for survivors – regardless of the institution and its characteristics in which the abuse occurred and no matter where they live. This is an urgent call to the Government to expedite a national redress scheme for Australian survivors of institutional child sexual abuse to finally let the healing begin.

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About

Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA) is the leading national organisation supporting the estimated five million Australian adults who are survivors of childhood trauma, including child sexual abuse.

Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN) is a National Peak membership body offering advocacy, research training and support for people raised in Australia's out of home care, foster care and other institutions

The Truth, Justice and Healing Council coordinates the Catholic Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse with a commitment to justice and compassion for survivors

The Australian Council of Social Service is the peak body of the community services and welfare sector and the national voice for the needs of people affected by poverty and inequality.

People with Disability Australia Incorporated (PWDA) is a national disability rights and advocacy organisation.