

National focus on child protection while political leaders continue to duck and weave around redress for child sexual abuse survivors

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This week the South Australian Government released its Royal Commission report into the state's child protection systems.

Last week the Federal Government announced a Royal Commission into the Northern Territory's juvenile justice system.

And nationally, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child sexual abuse continues to uncover the way in which many, many different organisations dealt with historical complaints of abuse.

Never before has our community and our lawmakers' attention been so sharply focused on the failures of individuals and institutions to protect children.

The report from the South Australian Royal Commission, which highlights five case studies of appalling failure and abuse, is damning.

South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill has apologised for the failures of the government agency charged with protecting children, Families SA, and said he will implement the Commission's recommendations.

He said his Government accepts full responsibility for the failings of the state's child protection system in keeping children safe.

'We failed to protect the children left in the care of Shannon McCoolle. We failed in our responsibility to keep these, and other children safe from harm. I am sorry for failing in this most fundamental duty to the children in our care,' he said.

'Now after all that we have seen over so many reports we have to accept that where there are vulnerable people there are going to be predators and sadly that might mean that we are going to have to behave in a different way,' he said.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Prime Minister Turnbull when he announced the Northern Territory Royal Commission last week.

'Australians were shocked and appalled by the images of mistreatment of children at the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in the Northern Territory. There can be no greater responsibility bestowed

on an adult, a parent, a government institution, than the protection of a child in their care,' the Prime Minister told the nation on July 28.

While the comments from both Premier Weatherill and Prime Minister Turnbull should be applauded, what neither are saying anything constructive about is the national Royal Commission's recommendations on redress for child sexual abuse survivors.

Why is it that both these consummate politicians are all too willing to stand up and make comments and commitments when they are directly in the firing line but when they can weave around the national child sexual abuse agenda they are all too quick to duck for cover?

For well over six months the Royal Commission's recommendations on redress for child sexual abuse survivors have been sitting on the desks of Malcolm Turnbull, Jay Weatherill and all the state and territory leaders. So far we have seen little or no meaningful action to put them in place.

It is all very good to announce a Royal Commission or some other major inquiry into any number of politically difficult issues so as to be seen as taking a problem seriously.

But after the time, expense and in the case of the child sex abuse commission the extreme pain and anguish for abuse survivors, becomes old news, the shame of inaction starts to be shared by both the institutions where the abuse took place and now our political leaders who are effectively turning a blind eye to the continuing suffering of so many adults who were abused as young children by institutions they should have been able to trust.

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