

National Redress Scheme

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National Redress Scheme— Annual report on operation of the scheme

The National Redress Scheme (the scheme) was created in response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The scheme commenced on 1 July 2018, and will operate for 10 years. The scheme acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions and seeks to hold institutions to account for this abuse and help people who have experienced abuse gain access to redress.

The scheme operates under the *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018* (the Act). The Act was passed by the Parliament in June 2018 following consultation with state and territory governments, institutions, survivors, support groups and advocates. Under the Act, the Secretary of the department is the scheme operator. The Act also requires the operator of the scheme to prepare a report for the Minister on the operation of the scheme as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year. The matters that the report must include are set out in section 75 of the *National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Rules 2018* (the Rules). The Minister must present the report to the Parliament.

This report describes the key operations of the scheme in its first year of operation (from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019) as required by the Act and the Rules.

How the scheme operates

A person can apply under the scheme if they:

- » experienced institutional child sexual abuse before 1 July 2018, and
- » are aged over 18 or will turn 18 before 30 June 2028, and
- » are an Australian citizen or permanent resident.

Under the scheme, an offer of redress consists of three components:

- » a counselling and psychological component
- » a redress payment
- » a direct personal response from each participating institution responsible for the abuse.

A redress monetary payment is calculated in accordance with the scheme's Assessment Framework. This Framework considers the person's individual circumstances and the kind of abuse they experienced as a child. Under the scheme, the maximum redress payment a person can receive is \$150,000 with any relevant prior payments related to the abuse deducted.

Counselling and psychological services differ depending on where the person lives at the time of applying for redress. In most states and territories they are offered as state based counselling and psychological services. For those residing in South Australia, Western Australia or overseas, they are offered as a direct payment to support access to services in the local area.

A direct personal response is an opportunity for survivors to have their experience of abuse and its impacts recognised by the responsible institution(s) in a manner that is meaningful to them. The survivor decides if, how and when their direct personal response will happen. A direct personal response can involve a senior official or representative from the responsible institution(s) listening, acknowledging, and apologising for the harm they caused. The representative may also outline what steps the institution has taken to prevent future abuse.

The scheme's first 12 months of operation

In the first 12 months to 30 June 2019:

- » 4,200 people applied for redress through the scheme
- » 346 people were assessed as eligible for redress (no one was assessed as ineligible)
- » 239 people accepted an offer of redress
- » no one declined an offer of redress
- » of the applications assessed as eligible for redress, 186 institutions were found to have been responsible across the individual cases of abuse
- » 239 redress payments were made ranging from less than \$10,000 to \$150,000, with an average payment of \$82,668.98
- » the total value of redress monetary payments was \$19,757,885.31
- » 143 people requested counselling and psychological care as part of their redress outcomes
- » 130 people requested a direct personal response from an institution.

During the first 12 months, the scheme worked closely with states, territories, and non-government institutions to encourage them to join the scheme and increase accessibility to those people who wish to apply.

On 1 July 2018, the scheme commenced operation with the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victorian and Australian Capital Territory government institutions and the YMCA, Scouts NSW and Korowal School participating in the scheme. By February 2019, all state and territory government institutions had joined and large parts of the Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Churches had voluntarily joined the scheme.

Figure 3.1: Applications by State

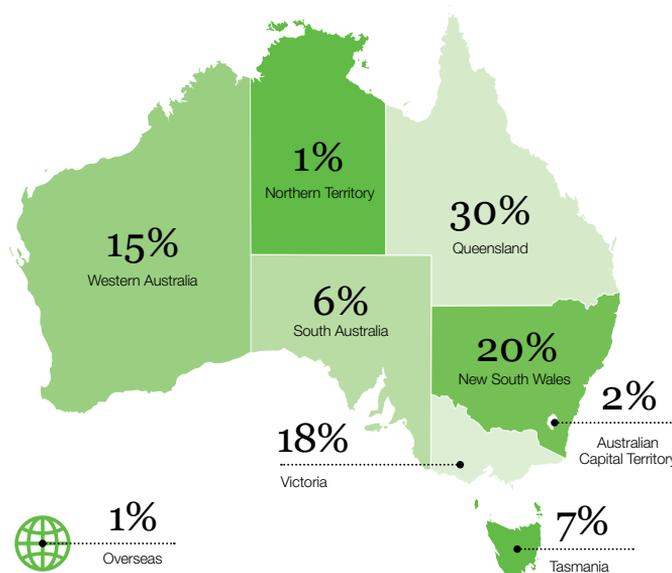
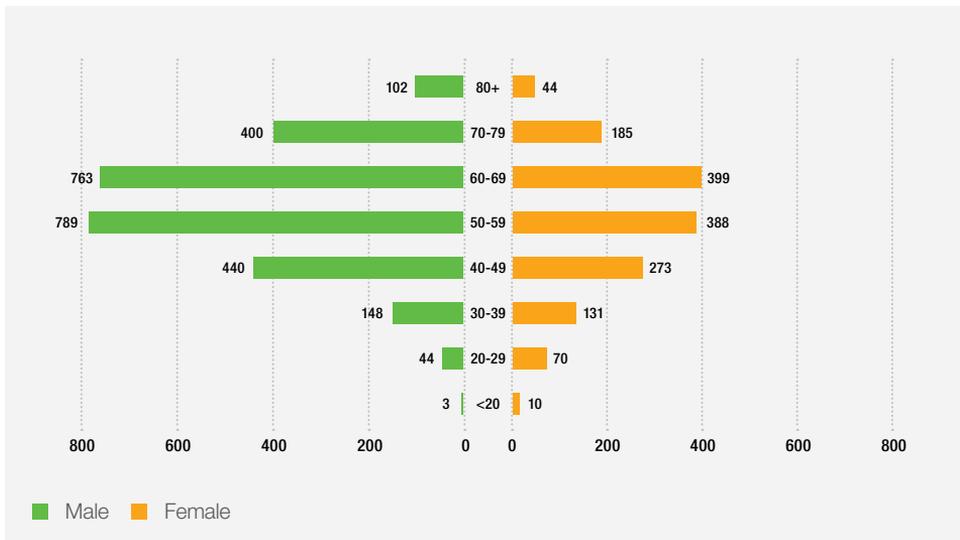




Figure 3.2: Applications received by gender



This brings the total number of sites (such as churches, schools and community groups) covered by the scheme to over 40,000 across Australia (as at 30 June 2019) with more institutions continuing to join.

As the number of institutions participating in the scheme increased, the number of applications that the scheme was able to progress also increased. The department (together with Services Australia, which administers the processing of applications under the scheme) is working to improve the scheme’s operations. These improvements are focussing on swifter processing of applications, in a compassionate and trauma informed manner, consistent with the scheme’s Act and Rules.

The scheme will also continue to work closely with institutions that are considering joining the scheme or have not joined.

Committees give voice to diversity and inclusion

As Australian public servants, we strive to provide a work environment as diverse as the community we serve.



The department, through its diversity committees and Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019–21, is building and supporting a diverse and inclusive workforce that mirrors the diversity of the Australian community.

Shelby is a recent graduate from the department's Indigenous Development Program. She is a Kamilaroi woman from Tamworth in New South Wales. She is a proud member of the department's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff National Committee, chaired by Jemma. "The department and the committee have given me the space to find my voice. Being part of this committee makes me feel like I have a small level of control in what can be a big machine at times," said Shelby.

Drew decided to work for the department because of his passion for equality, equity and social inclusion. He is now co-chair of the Pride Committee with Kate. "Through our events, the department has given a voice to LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer) people that enables all staff to gain insight into LGBTIQ experiences. The Pride Committee has given staff authority to bring their whole selves to work, to speak openly about their partners and their lives, and bring their full life experiences into the work they do to better support people in Australia," said Drew.

Karen is chair of the Disability and Carers Committee. Within the department, 1 in 16 staff members identify with disability. Over 40 per cent of people have caring

responsibilities according to last year's Australian Public Service Census. "A highlight was participating in the Graduate Orientation program with the other diversity committees. We hosted three groups of graduates for an hour on disability and carers; each session included immersion activities, information on our committee and promoting diversity and inclusion."

By employing a diverse workforce it exemplifies what all Australian employers and businesses are encouraged to embrace, that engaging a blend of experiences, perspectives and skills benefits the country's productivity and capability.

ABOVE: Karen, Drew, Jemma and Kate.

See Part 4, Chapter 4.3 for more information.