



Australian Government

# National Redress Scheme

For people who have experienced  
institutional child sexual abuse

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# Understanding the National Redress Scheme





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# About this booklet

This booklet is for any person aged 18 years or over, who is considering applying to the National Redress Scheme in Australia.

This booklet provides information to help you decide if the National Redress Scheme is right for you, what it offers, how to apply, and how to get help.

## **This booklet contains information that may be emotionally distressing.**

If you need immediate assistance, you can contact:

**Blue Knot Foundation** – 1300 657 380

**Beyond Blue** – 1300 224 636

**Care Leavers Australasia Network** – 1800 008 774

**Full Stop Australia** – 1800 385 578

**Lifeline** – 13 11 14

**MensLine Australia** – 1300 789 978

**1800RESPECT** – 1800 737 732

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The National Redress Scheme **acknowledges** that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions.

It **recognises** the suffering endured because of this abuse, and holds institutions **accountable** for this abuse.

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## About the National Redress Scheme

The Australian Government set up the National Redress Scheme in 2018 after the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Over five years, the Royal Commission heard from more than 16,000 brave people who shared their experiences of sexual abuse that happened when they were in institutions.

### What is redress?

Redress means acknowledging the harm done to people who experienced child sexual abuse in institutions and holding the institutions responsible to account.

People can apply to the National Redress Scheme by filling in a paper application form, or they can apply online through myGov.

An offer of redress can include:



**a payment**



**counselling that is confidential and culturally safe**



**a direct personal response, such as an apology, from an institution.**

You can choose what parts of the redress offer you want to receive.

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## Who is eligible for redress?

You are eligible for redress if:

- you experienced sexual abuse when you were **under 18 years of age**, and
- you were born before **30 June 2010**, and
- the abuse happened before **1 July 2018** while you were in an institution, and
- you are an **Australian citizen** or permanent resident when you apply.

### More information about eligibility

You can find more detailed information about eligibility at [nationalredress.gov.au/applying/who-can-apply](https://nationalredress.gov.au/applying/who-can-apply)



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## Applying for redress

People can apply to the National Redress Scheme by filling in a paper or online application form, or they may be referred by a professional.

Many people find it helpful to talk to someone about applying, to get help filling in the application form, or when considering an offer of redress.



**You can fill in and lodge an application online through myGov or in writing.**



**You can ask someone you trust to help you fill out an application form or nominate someone to apply on your behalf.**



**You can fill out the application in your own time.**



**Applications are open until 30 June 2027.**

### Advice before starting an application

You can find out more about what's involved in applying to the National Redress Scheme at

[nationalredress.gov.au/applying/start-continue-application](https://nationalredress.gov.au/applying/start-continue-application)



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## How long does it take to receive an offer of redress?

The time taken to apply and receive an offer of redress is different for everyone because each person's circumstances are different.



**The average time to process an application is 12 months, but may take longer.**



**Including as much information as you can in your application can reduce the processing time.**



**Redress Support Services are available and offer confidential emotional and practical support throughout this time.**

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## What are Redress Support Services?

Redress Support Services are free and independent and offer emotional and practical support.

### They can:

- be someone to talk to
- provide information about eligibility and discuss other options
- help you fill out the application form
- speak with the National Redress Scheme on your behalf.

Specialist Redress Support Services are available for people with disability, from culturally diverse backgrounds, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, care leavers and former child migrants.

knowmore Legal Service provides free, confidential legal support and financial counselling.

### Find Redress Support Services near you

You can see a list of Redress Support Services available in your state or territory at:

[nationalredress.gov.au/support/explore](https://nationalredress.gov.au/support/explore)



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## Holding institutions to account

Institutions that are found responsible for the sexual abuse of children are held accountable by the National Redress Scheme.

**An institution could be a school, church or place of worship, mission, orphanage, foster care, hospital, detention centre or a sporting club.**



This includes situations when sexual abuse happened on the premises of an institution or when it happened during an activity organised by the institution, such as camp.

The Australian Government strongly encourages all institutions who have a history of interacting with children to join the National Redress Scheme.

If a person applying for redress names an institution that has not already joined the National Redress Scheme, the institution is given six months to sign up.

If the institution does not join within six months, they may be publicly named, could face financial penalties, and may lose their charitable status until they join.

### Find institutions that have joined

You can check if an institution has joined the National Redress Scheme at [nationalredress.gov.au/institutions/search](https://nationalredress.gov.au/institutions/search)



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“

I've closed a part of my life and I'm finally able to move on. It doesn't take away the pain of what happened to me, but something has healed. ”

**Jessie, survivor**

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## An alternative to legal action

The National Redress Scheme is an alternative to taking legal action against an institution.

When you apply to the National Redress Scheme, the level of proof required is lower than the courts, and you don't have direct contact with the institution.

Below are the key differences between applying for redress, and making a civil claim in the courts.

National Redress Scheme	Civil claim in the courts
Application form	Complex process
Can get an apology	Can get an apology
Free, confidential Redress Support Services available throughout process	Support services may be available depending on circumstances
Maximum compensation amount is \$150,000*	No limit on compensation
May have an impact on Centrelink payments	May have an impact on Centrelink payments
Free to apply	May involve legal costs
Lower legal standard of proof required	Higher legal standard of proof required

\*Redress payments range from less than \$10,000 to a maximum of \$150,000 depending on the type of abuse.

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“

Come forward and talk.  
Talk to someone and  
go through the National  
Redress Scheme. Get actual  
recognition about what  
happened to you. ”

**Martin, survivor**

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## Who runs the National Redress Scheme?

The National Redress Scheme is run by the Australian Department of Social Services, but an independent decision maker considers applications, decides on the outcome and conducts reviews.

Independent decision makers are highly experienced, respected people from a range of backgrounds, including social welfare, case management and the law.

### Independent Decision Makers

You can find out more about independent decision makers at:

[nationalredress.gov.au/applying/what-happens-next/independent-decision-makers](https://nationalredress.gov.au/applying/what-happens-next/independent-decision-makers)



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## How is child sexual abuse defined under the National Redress Scheme?

Child sexual abuse is when someone involves a person under the age of 18 in sexual activities they do not understand, are against community standards, or are against the law.

### Child sexual abuse may include (but is not limited to):

- sexual touching of any part of the body, either clothed or unclothed, including with an object
- grooming – preparing or encouraging a child to engage in sexual activity, including showing a child sexual acts or any inappropriate material
- sex of any kind with a child
- persuading or forcing a child to engage in sexual activity
- sexual acts done by an adult of any gender, to a child of any gender.

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I encourage others to apply for redress – it’s never too late to be heard. ”

**Lana, survivor**

# National Redress Scheme

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**To find out more about your options or to connect  
with Redress Support Services, call 1800 737 377**

Available Monday to Friday,  
8am-5pm Australian Eastern Time

**Or visit [nationalredress.gov.au](http://nationalredress.gov.au)**

