

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016-2017 Additional Estimates Hearings

-Outcome Number: 2.1 Families and Communities

Question No: SQ17-000167

Topic: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Hansard page: 141

Senator Louise Pratt asked:

What is in your plan to ensure that you are able to respond quickly to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. I am more interested in the preventative aspects relating to current children in Australia rather than the redress scheme.

Answer:

The Department of Social Services has been working closely with state and territory governments and the non-government sector to develop a framework at the national level to make organisations safe for children and young people. This work is being progressed as part of the Third Action Plan of the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*.

A key element of this work, agreed by Community Services Ministers from the Commonwealth, states and territories at their meeting of 11 November 2016, is the development of a National Statement of Principles for Child Safe Organisations to be endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG). Community Services Ministers have agreed to a phased approach for the development of the National Statement of Principles over an 18 month period, from early 2017.

The National Statement of Principles will be used as a benchmark for jurisdictional child safety policy making and will draw on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission). It will drive implementation of a child-safe culture across all sectors that have regular contact with children, ensuring that a culture is embedded that prevents the abuse of children and young people in organisational environments.

The Department of Social Services has engaged the National Children's Commissioner to develop a draft National Statement of Principles and a project plan for subsequent stages, including a national cross-sector engagement process, the development of child safe organisation resources and a communications strategy to assist implementation. Preliminary consultations with a range of stakeholders will commence in early May 2017.

The Royal Commission has also made recommendations in relation to working with children checks. The Attorney-General's Department is the lead Commonwealth agency for this work. Questions on this matter should be referred to the Attorney-General's Department.