



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Social Services**

**Ray Griggs AO CSC**  
**Secretary**

Senator Catryna Bilyk  
Chair, Joint Standing Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme  
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In response to the Committee's concerns regarding how applications detailing virginity testing are managed, the Scheme is committed to implementing a range of priority improvements. These are:

- Revising the policy guidance on abuse in medical settings to include specific reference to the 2018 World Health Organisation, Office of the High Commissioner, United Nations Human Rights and United Nations Women interagency statement '*Eliminating Virginity Testing*'<sup>1</sup> (UN interagency statement) which condemns virginity testing as a violation of several fundamental human rights with no scientific merit or clinical indication,
- Clarifying the policy guidance for Independent Decision Makers (IDM) to consider in determining whether abuse in medical settings or during medical procedures is sexual abuse for the purposes of the Scheme,
- Creating a panel of IDM to build knowledge and specialise in making determinations on applications that detail abuse in medical settings and intrusive internal examinations,
- Enhancing IDM training on abuse in medical settings to include consideration of the UN interagency statement and revised policy, and

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<sup>1</sup> [EliminatingVirginityTestingAnInteragency.pdf \(ohchr.org\)](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/VirginityTesting/UNInteragencyStatement.pdf)

- Identifying applicants who have described abuse relating to intrusive internal examinations and were found ineligible prior to the updated policy advice in 2022 and providing them an opportunity to seek a review of their application if they want to do this.

The department has provided this information related to abuse in medical settings on the expectation the Committee will publish it.

Kind regards

21 October 2024