



Anglican Church of Australia

Anglican Representative (National Redress Scheme) Ltd

17 April 2020

The Committee Secretary
Joint Select Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme
Department of the Senate
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Canberra ACT 2600

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Submission on behalf of the Anglican Participating Group

The Anglican Church of Australia (ACA) is committed to responding to the needs of persons who have been abused in its care and welcomed the establishment of National Redress Scheme (the Scheme). It appreciated the opportunity, as a non-government institution, to be consulted on the design and operations of the Scheme. The ACA's contribution focussed on ensuring the National Redress Scheme reflected the Royal Commission's recommendations and delivered the desired outcome.

This submission is made by the Anglican Representative (National Redress Scheme) Ltd (ARNRSL), a company established by the ACA to be the representative entity for the Anglican Participating Group in the Scheme.

At this stage of the Scheme's operation all twenty-three Anglican dioceses are participating in the Scheme. More than three-quarters of all Anglican schools are participating and we continue to support others in their application process. The majority of Anglican mission and community service agencies which provide services to children are participating. All Anglican institutions named in the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse have joined the Scheme.

Anglican institutions take responsibility for approximately 5,500 sites listed on the National Redress Scheme's participating institution database.

ARNRSL appreciates the work of this Select Committee in reviewing the implementation of the Scheme and hopes the review of operations will result in an improved experience for both applicants and participating institutions.

ARNRSL, and the Anglican institutions it represents, are committed to ensuring the Scheme offers a pathway to redress for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse which provides consistency of outcome and independent decision making.

As the representative entity for all Anglican participating institutions ARNRSL is able to reflect on the first 15 months of its participation and bring to the Committee's attention a number of concerns in relation to the operation of the Scheme.

These concerns generally relate to the resources allocated to support the implementation of the Scheme and we submit to the Committee that additional resources should be allocated to ensure that the Scheme is able to deliver on its objectives.

Delays in Determinations

Since commencing in the Scheme in December 2018, the Anglican participating group has responded to more than 470 Requests for Information. To date, this has resulted in only 164 determinations, just over one third, with the remainder of applications still outstanding, many for months at a time.

We recognise the detrimental impact the delays in finalising determinations are having on applicants.

We have raised this concern with the Scheme Operator and acknowledge the commitment made to allocate more resources to reduce the application turnaround period.

Errors in application of the rules of the Scheme

A number of members of the Anglican participating group have been disadvantaged through errors made by departmental officers in the Scheme's application processes.

This has included errors in the identification of the responsible institution, misinterpretation of the structure of prior payments made by an institution, and the calculation of the redress payment taking into account prior payments and other responsible institutions.

ARNRSL, and the Anglican institutions it represents, are committed to complying with all determinations made in accordance with the legislative and regulatory framework of the scheme and accept that there is no right of review in relation to the determinations made under the Scheme. However, the ACA requests that there be a process by which an institution can challenge errors made in the application of the rules and regulations, during the determination process.

These ongoing issues have been brought to the attention of the Scheme Operator and we acknowledge the commitment to introduce a quality assurance process to check for errors before an offer under the Scheme is confirmed and the applicant advised.

We have been advised that the introduction of quality assurance process will also require additional resources and we recommend that these resources be made available.

As one of the first large faith-based institutions to join the Scheme, we have been very willing to work in conjunction with the Scheme Operator to identify and resolve operational issues as they have arisen. We have appreciated our engagement with senior officers in Department of Social Services and have raised these concerns directly with Minister Ruston's office.

In summary, ARNRSL submits the Scheme operations should be appropriately structured and resourced to ensure the Scheme can be delivered as it was designed. It should cause no further trauma to applicants and offer a fair outcome to its participating institutions.

We would welcome the opportunity to expand upon the issues raised in this submission if required.

Yours sincerely

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