



President: Stuart McMillan

General Secretary: Colleen Geyer

2 March 2018

Senator Slade Brockman

Chair, Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100,
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

by email: Community.Affairs.Sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Brockman,

Re: Inquiry into the Commonwealth Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Bill 2017 and related bill.

I refer to the hearing of 16 February 2018 at which the Uniting Church was asked a question on notice. The question on notice: Please provide information related to *“interactions you've had with state governments on this matter, and what feedback you're getting from state governments”*?

The Uniting Church confirms that a request was made of each Synod with respect to the above question, and the responses are provided on the schedule overleaf. The data is provided in summary form to assist the committee in its on-going task of reviewing the legislation related to the provision of a Commonwealth Redress Scheme. Should you require further information or clarification, please contact Rev John Cox, Executive Officer Uniting Church Royal Commission National Task Group.

Yours Sincerely

John Cox (Rev)
Executive Officer, Royal Commission National Task Group
Uniting Church in Australia



Uniting Church Synod	Interactions with State Government	Feedback Received
NSW/ACT	<p>Following the release of the Royal Commission's Redress and Civil Litigation report, the NSW Department of Justice held some exploratory consultations regarding Redress. The Department initiated these meetings.</p> <p>No further interactions have occurred related to Redress</p>	<p>As these were exploratory consultations and they were very early after the release of the report, no feedback was provided by Department staff to the Church.</p>
Vic/Tas	<p>The Victorian Government had conducted a Victorian Commission of inquiry prior to the commencement of the Royal Commission, and released its report, which also recommended the development of a Redress scheme, prior to the release of the Royal Commission's report.</p> <p>Since that time, an ecumenical group of Churches, of which the Uniting Church was one has been regularly engaging with Victorian Government Departments and Ministers. This group continued to meet with Government throughout the period since the release of the Royal Commission's Redress report. These periodic meetings explored issues initially relating only to establishing a Victorian Redress Scheme but then expanded from November 2016 to include discussions about the proposed Commonwealth Redress Scheme.</p> <p>Meetings have been held as recently as February 2018.</p>	<p>Feedback throughout the process was mainly offered with respect to the design, legal underpinnings, funding and resourcing of a Redress Scheme (either Victorian or Commonwealth) and particular issues related to those processes.</p>
Queensland	<p>The Queensland Government facilitated a Round Table (first half of 2017) with Churches in Queensland. The purpose of the Round Table was to explore issues related to Redress (and the Royal Commission)</p> <p>Two meetings were then held between Uniting Church leaders and</p>	<p>Very minimal feedback was received in the round table or the follow up meetings as they were intended to generate a scope of issues for discussion; and explore particular issues related to the proposed Redress Scheme.</p>



	senior Public Servants in the first half of 2017. The meetings were to explore particular issues related to Redress. No further engagement has occurred.	
Northern	There was no Redress related engagement by the Church with the Northern Territory Government, nor any by the Northern Territory Government with the Church.	
South Australia	A letter was sent to the Premier of South Australia in April 2017. The letter urged the state government to opt-in to the scheme.	The Synod has not received a response.
Western Australia	A letter was sent to the premier of Western Australia in the 2 nd half of 2017. The letter enquired as to the State's position on opting into a Commonwealth Redress Scheme and encouraged that opting in for the benefit of survivors.	The Synod has not received a response