

28 April 2026

Joint Standing Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
By email to: redress@aph.gov.au

To the Committee members

RE: Inquiry into the continuing operation of the National Redress Scheme – Response to question on notice

Thank you for the opportunity for the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse (the National Centre) to appear at the public hearing of this inquiry on 8 April 2026. As Chief Executive Officer, it was a privilege to appear alongside our Director of Lived Experience, Dr Lucy Knox, and three of the National Centre's Lived Experience Advisers: Laura-Jane Singh, Sandra Collins and Robbie Gambley.

As you will recall, our Lived Experience Advisers spoke to the Committee about their personal experiences of navigating the National Redress Scheme at different points in time.

At the hearing, the Committee Chair asked what has improved and what has worsened in the Scheme since the time of those experiences. As the Committee will appreciate, each adviser engaged with the Scheme at a different stage of its operation, experienced different processes, and received different outcomes. As they each expressed in their own words, the impacts of their experiences of the Scheme were profound and, in some cases, damaging.

Since the time of those experiences, the National Centre acknowledges that the Scheme has been subject to ongoing review and inquiry, that numerous recommendations for improvement have been made, and that some changes have been implemented or are in progress. These reviews reflect sustained effort by governments to improve the operation of the Scheme.

However, we continue to hear through inquiries such as this one that significant challenges remain. Some victim-survivors continue to experience barriers in accessing the Scheme, difficulties obtaining sufficient support to navigate the process, and outcomes that they do not feel adequately acknowledge the harm they have suffered. Victim-survivors also continue to report inconsistent experiences of the Scheme, including experiences that they describe as harmful or re-traumatising. These ongoing inconsistencies indicate that there remains substantial work to be done to ensure that all victim-survivors experience the Scheme as trauma-informed and are able to access the support they need without being subjected to further harm.

As outlined in our submission, the National Centre recognises that for some victim-survivors the Scheme has been life-changing and has provided meaningful recognition, healing and compensation. At the same time, the persistence of varied and, in some cases, damaging experiences underscores the importance of continuing reform and sustained investment.

In that context, we continue to encourage the Committee to recommend that:

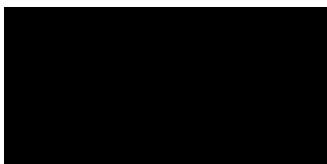
- The Australian Government and state and territory governments ensure that all victim-survivors who wish to apply to the National Redress Scheme have the opportunity to do so by extending the current legislated application closure date of 30 June 2027 by two years, and by urgently launching a public awareness campaign to ensure victim-survivors are aware of the new closing date. This extension should be used to address known implementation issues raised by people with lived experience of child sexual abuse, the Committee and other key stakeholders, including the specific support needs of Stolen Generations victim-survivors. (Recommendation 6 in our submission.)
- The Australian Government ensure that additional funding is allocated in advance so that redress support services are sufficiently resourced to support applicants until all applications are finalised and all redress outcomes are delivered. Based on current volumes, this is likely to extend well beyond the Scheme's current legislated end date of July 2028. (Recommendation 7 in our submission.)

We also continue to advocate for reforms outside the Scheme to ensure that victim-survivors who cannot, or choose not to, engage with the Scheme have access to meaningful alternatives to seek justice. In that regard, we encourage the Committee to recommend that:

- The Australian Government ensure that the legislated eighth anniversary review of the National Redress Scheme is conducted in an open and transparent manner, enabling victim-survivors and other key stakeholders to contribute their views on ongoing support needs beyond the Scheme. (Recommendation 8 in our submission.)
- The Australian, state and territory governments address existing gaps in victim-survivor support by properly funding, under the Second Action Plan of the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030, a nationally consistent Lifespan Supports Program for victim-survivor healing and recovery, co-designed with victim-survivors of child sexual abuse. (Recommendation 9 in our submission.)

We thank the Committee for its consideration of these matters.

Kind regards



Dr Janine Bush
Chief Executive Officer