

## Royal Commission in Child Sexual Abuse – funding

Let me say that at the outset there can be no suggestion that funding was taken away from the Child Abuse Royal Commission that it needed, or without its knowledge.

The Child Abuse Royal Commission manages its own budget. However, as Secretary of AGD I am ultimately responsible for that expenditure. That responsibility involves ensuring that taxpayer funds are used most efficiently, and that where underspends arise those resources can be appropriately applied for other public purposes consistent with decisions of government.

The savings arose as a result of some capital fit out works undertaken by the Child Abuse Royal Commission coming in under budget. Some \$4 million was identified as a saving.

The CEO of the Child Abuse Royal Commission has this morning confirmed to my Department that the Royal Commission currently has enough money in capital and operating budgets to continue its work. Figures to the end of April 2014 show that the Royal Commission has a capital and operating budget of \$82,785,000 for this financial year (after the \$4 million capital underspend was made available by the Commission), with expenditure of \$57,572,000. (see attached table).

The Home Insulation Program Royal Commission has total funding of \$20 million. The Attorney-General's portfolio is responsible for \$6.7 million of this funding. The portfolio was able to fund this through the identified \$4 million in capital savings.

An additional \$2.7 million in Departmental Funding was also used as part of AGD's contribution to the HIP Royal Commission. It was available because the Commonwealth has not incurred expected costs for its representation before the Child Abuse Royal Commission in 2013-14.

I confirm that both the Royal Commission capital funding and the departmental funding were as a result of savings ie money that has been appropriated, and would otherwise be returned to the Consolidated Revenue Fund. It was not a case of removing funding from an existing need, and leaving that need under resourced.

In relation to the departmental funding, that \$2.7million was a saving from monies not required for financial assistance and legal costs that were expected to be incurred by the Commonwealth as a party to the Royal Commission – it did not impact on funding for other witnesses before the Royal Commission or the Royal Commission itself.

At this stage the Commission has not formally requested an extension, although the Attorney-General has indicated that he has had some discussions with the Commissioner about this. When a request is made, the request – and the additional resourcing that may be required - will be fully and properly considered by Government.

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