

Manifesto for the national redress scheme

1. Introduction

The Alliance for Forgotten Australians congratulates the Australian Government for the introduction of its redress scheme. We particularly congratulate the Victorian, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory Governments for joining the scheme. We urge other governments to join the scheme so it is truly national.

The scheme is a very good start. But it's only a start. AFA remains concerned about aspects of the scheme. We are also concerned about its implementation.

We aren't asking for the world. Redress isn't a windfall and neither is it compensation. Redress for survivors is a moral issue. It's about righting injustices perpetrated under the watch of those who were supposed to be our guardians. You took away our childhoods. You paid nothing for us. You used our labour and we worked long and hard at the expense of our health.

2. All forms of abuse are covered

AFA recognises that the scheme is limited to those who experienced sexual abuse. We will never accept this eligibility criterion. What may be defined as sexual in an intellectual, legal and eligibility context needs to acknowledge, with the support of overwhelming evidence, that all forms of abuse in an institutional context are connected.

Australia is out of step in its approach to redress. No redress scheme in the world limits eligibility to sexual abuse. The United Kingdom's Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (1 March 2018) found that the British Government failed to ensure that there were in place sufficient measures to protect children from sexual abuse, as well as other forms of abuse and neglect. Children were placed in environments where they were exposed to a range of risks, including the risk of sexual abuse, and where sexual abuse was less likely to be prevented, identified, reported or stopped.

The Royal Commission recommended a redress scheme for survivors of sexual abuse in institutional 'care' in accordance with its terms of reference. It didn't recommend *against* a scheme which included all forms of abuse. Governments put boundaries around policies to rein in costs without sufficient consideration of the impact of their decisions.

3. Implementation of the redress scheme

1. Redress is not a substitute for other forms of support and funding by governments. A redress scheme is only one component of what Forgotten Australians and other survivors need.

2. A significant number of people will miss out under this redress scheme. Please don't forget we've been telling you this for more than a year.
3. Abuse affects entire families. It has an intergenerational impact. Counselling and support must be provided to *all* family members.
4. The lessons from the 13 Inquiries held into us since 2000, and the Royal Commission, must be applied to the children who are presently in 'care'. The system is still flawed. There are no more institutions, but institutional practice remains.
5. The continuation or establishment of quality, trauma-informed support services is essential. Despite the best possible design, Forgotten Australians and other survivors may be traumatised by the application process. Don't withdraw or diminish the support we have. Just in case you ask, we are *not* all OK.
6. Don't develop policies or design implementation and communication strategies without us. We want to engage meaningfully with governments. We've been through too much for more tick and flick exercises. We have the knowledge and moral authority you need to make redress work for survivors.

Unfinished business

All governments have unfinished business. We have unfinished business with governments. We are getting older and some of us are prematurely ageing. Our health may be failing. Some of us have made an apparent success of our lives, and have hidden our pain and scars pretty well. Others are living in poverty and despair. We don't want to be re-institutionalised and the prospect scares the hell out of us. Despite all that has been done, you have unfinished business. We need to be recognised as a priority special needs group for health care and access to the disability support pension. Your unfinished business is our unfinished business.

We need to be supported to live the remainder of our lives with dignity; safely; as healthily as possible; on our terms; without asking for scraps.



Caroline Carroll OAM
Chair
And all members of the Alliance for Forgotten Australians

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