

Improvement Update

What is the Improvement Update?

The Improvement Update (the Update) has been introduced to keep survivors, advocates and the wider public informed of improvements to the National Redress Scheme (the Scheme).

These improvements will increase access to the Scheme and improve the way the Scheme works. Many of these improvements relate to recommendations of the Second Year Review of the Scheme. They only cover the recommendations the Commonwealth, and State and Territory Governments have agreed to.

The Update describes changes made to the Scheme, along with changes that are in progress.

Improvements in progress

The following are improvements that are currently in progress or that are being planned for the National Redress Scheme.

- Ongoing - The Scheme is continuously improving ICT systems, processes and training. This will assist our staff to provide survivors with the support they need throughout their redress journey.
- Ongoing - The Scheme is reviewing the outcome letter package to increase simplicity and accessibility. Survivors are provided with the outcome letter package when a determination is made on their redress application.
- Ongoing - The Scheme is updating the Application for Redress form to be more trauma-informed and increase accessibility and user friendliness. Updates will be reflected in the myGov and fillable PDF versions of the form.

Improvements made

The following are improvements that have already been made to the Scheme and the dates when these were made.

May 2023 –

- The Government released its [Final Response to the Second Year Review Report](#). The response details a range of further improvements to the Scheme with a focus on survivors and making the Scheme as trauma informed as it can be.
- The Scheme has established a **Trauma-informed Framework**. This will ensure the Scheme continues to operate in a trauma-informed way whenever possible. It will also assist the Scheme improve how we provide our service.

March 2023 –

- The Scheme has implemented a **new Complaints Management Framework**. The Framework will provide consistency in the way complaints are handled and ensure survivors receive high quality, and trauma-informed complaint management service. Insights from complaints and feedback will be used to identify Scheme improvements.

February 2023 –

- The Intergovernmental Agreement that governs the National Redress Scheme was updated to ensure **survivors and advocacy groups have formal input into the Scheme's operations**.

December 2022 –

- The Scheme introduced a new payment by instalment SMS notification that provides survivors the option to receive **SMS notifications in alignment with their instalment schedules**. This will increase transparency for survivors to know when they will be receiving their payments.

September 2022 –

- To **encourage survivors to access Redress Support Services** and submit as much information as they can as part of their initial application, a new banner has been added to the Redress Member Service through myGov.
- [The Service Charter for the National Redress Scheme](#) was introduced. This document explains what people can expect from the National Redress Scheme.

August 2022 –

- **The National Redress Scheme Data Strategy 2022 – 2028 was developed** to support the Scheme's data management, staff capabilities, data analytics and technology. This will assist in establishing a stronger data-driven culture within the Scheme.

July 2022 –

- **The funder of last resort (FOLR) provisions were expanded.** This covers defunct institutions, where there is no parent institution or representative to take responsibility and a Commonwealth, State or Territory government institution is not responsible for the abuse. It also covers situations where institutions do not have the financial capacity to join the Scheme. The expanded FOLR arrangements will increase access to redress for survivors as more institutions will be covered by these provisions.

August 2021 to June 2022 –

- The Scheme provided additional funding to **Redress Support Services to address service gaps and provide additional outreach.** The Scheme is also funding additional Redress Support Services to 30 June 2024. This will improve access and support for people who are considering applying, or wish to apply to the Scheme. This includes funding for knowmore Legal Service to provide dedicated free financial counselling services to all redress survivors. This is in addition to the free advice and support they continue to offer survivors.

June 2022 –

- **The Scheme finalised a review of Redress Support Services** to identify best practices in providing culturally appropriate and trauma-informed services. This will assist the Scheme and Redress Support Services in making future improvements to how we operate.
- The Scheme automated **how participating institutions report on Direct Personal Responses.** This will enable the Scheme to have better data to improve the Direct Personal Response process for survivors.

May 2022 –

- **Redress specific staff training and reporting on training** was mandated to ensure staff and external stakeholders are equipped with the most update to date information and skills to support the survivor journey and experience with the Scheme.

April 2022 –

- To enhance the quality and consistency of decision making on redress applications, **a panel of Chief Independent Decision Makers (IDMs) was appointed.** The Scheme has also introduced a de-identified application and decision database for Independent Decision Makers to assist them with their decision making. The Scheme is also improving the training and resources that are available to Independent Decision Makers.
- The Scheme introduced a new **Direct Personal Response Information and Support Service.** The service provides assistance to survivors when receiving a direct personal response from institutions responsible for their abuse.

March 2022 –

- System upgrades were implemented to allow for **payments to be made to multiple beneficiaries for deceased estates**. This aims to ease the administrative burden for beneficiaries.
- Options for survivors to receive their redress **payment by instalments** were introduced. Payment by instalments provides choice and flexibility to survivors and their beneficiaries around how redress payments are received.
- **The requirement for an application to be also have a witnessed statutory declaration was removed**. This has helped to remove a barrier to access redress for survivors.

January 2022 –

- **A scheduled progress update call service** was introduced. This gives survivors the option to schedule calls with their case coordinator for updates on the progress of their application.
- The Scheme has **improved the way determinations are delivered** to survivors. The Scheme now tries to schedule follow up phone calls with survivors when they receive their outcome letter package. This gives survivors the chance to ask questions when going through their redress offer.

October 2021 –

- Changes were made to how the Scheme calculates **the indexation of relevant prior payments** when determining a survivor's redress payment. Relevant prior payments are now indexed to the date the survivor applies for redress, not when a determination is made on their application. This will ensure survivors are not financially disadvantaged by the time taken to progress an application.
- An **advance payment for redress** was introduced. This allows the Scheme to make an offer of an advance payment to survivors who meet certain criteria, such as being terminally ill, over 70 years of age or 55 years and older for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

Contact us

If you have questions or need advice or support, you can contact us.

- **Calling from Australia:** by phone on 1800 737 377 from Australia (call charges may apply), Monday to Friday 8am-5pm AEDT.
- **Redress Support:** A list of free, independent support services and their contact details are available at the website www.nationalredress.gov.au/support. Services can provide practical and emotional support, legal advice, and financial counselling. They can support you before, during and after you apply for redress.