**National Redress Scheme**

**First Nations Case Study Video – Robert**

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This video is about the National Redress Scheme for people who've experienced institutional child sexual abuse.

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Watching this could bring up bad memories.

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It can be helpful to talk to someone if this happens to you.

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Support is available from Redress Support Services who understand culture and will keep things private.

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To find out more, call 1800 737 377.

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When I was 17 I went to an institution and I experienced some activities that changed my life and the trauma from that, it's taken me a long time to work through.

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Robert is my first name and I very proudly come from the Toogee mob in the South West corner of Tasmania.

**Graphic:** When Robert was 17 years old, he joined a training institution. During his time there he was sexually abused.

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I felt unable to communicate effectively to people about what I'd experienced at that training institution, and I also found it very difficult over a long period of time to try and understand why do these symptoms drive me, why am I showering all the time, feeling unclean all the time

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and finding it very out of proportion my reaction to some circumstances and I had no explanation, no idea of what was driving this, until eventually I talked to a very good friend of mine who identified what I was talking about, and he said,

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"you need to go and talk

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to someone about this".

**Graphic:** Robert sought support through the National Redress Scheme for counselling, an apology and financial redress from the institution.

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My psychologist understood about the National Redress Scheme and knew of an organisation that could help me.

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And so I made contact with them and essentially I followed a process of a discussion about what I'd experienced.

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They advised me that they believed what I was saying was true and they were happy to assist with me on my redress journey.

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It's a bit like turning the light on.

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If you're in a dark room and you don't know why you're experiencing or why you're feeling these internal traumas, if you turn the light on, then you can see.

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I can see where this is coming from.

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I can deal with it.

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And indeed that was my light globe moment when I was told by the Aboriginal Redress Support Scheme that we recommend you go through the process of putting in an application, which I did.

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I said, I want to draw up the document into draft form and I will present that back to the Aboriginal redress coordinators.

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They had some working to do on it because I was having trouble communicating my feelings and putting them into cognitive sentences, which looking back, it shows how traumatised I was.

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But having said that, having done that, it's like a cleansing moment.

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You can stand up, you can enjoy the space, enjoy the air, feel the breeze, and move on.

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My story was very sincere and from the heart and very, very close to my emotional levels.

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And so, I've received several counselling sessions from that to make sure that I am happy with the process the way it's progressing.

**Graphic:** The National Redress Scheme can’t change what happened but can provide support so you can move forward in a way that works for you.

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It took me some time to get over my feelings and to understand that I can't be hurt anymore, that I'm feeling responsible for myself and for my actions.

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And so, the redress I see as important for my journey.

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The most important element for me was the apology.

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For them to recognise that under that institution, I received trauma and I was simply not believed.

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The second bit to me is that they came back and told me how proud they were of me being able to express my story and indeed it's taken me some time to appreciate the exact words that they said to me; how proud I can now be that I've been

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to redress and I've progressed from that process.

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The money side, it will be important, but to me the main thing is how to fix my heart.

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If I start to feel better, then I will start to be better and I will get better.

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To find out more about Redress Support Services

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call 1800 737 377 from Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm.

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Or visit nationalredress.gov.au