

National Redress Scheme

For people who have experienced
institutional child sexual abuse

The National Redress Scheme's **Improvement Update**

August | 2024



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What is the Improvement Update?

The Improvement Update (the Update) has been introduced to keep survivors, advocates and the broader community informed of improvements to the National Redress Scheme (the Scheme). The Update describes changes made to the Scheme, along with changes that are in progress. 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](#) and only cover the recommendations the Commonwealth, and State and Territory Governments have agreed to.

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Continuous Improvements

The following improvements are currently ongoing for the National Redress Scheme.

- The Scheme has developed a **comprehensive resource library for staff on the application process**. It will provide staff with a collection of interactive maps that contain information, operational guidance and templates on each application stage.
- The Scheme is **continuously improving ICT systems**, processes and training. This will assist staff to support survivors throughout their redress journey.
- The Scheme is committed to **continuously reviewing all applicant facing outcome letters** to ensure the letters reflect the legislative requirements for redress and are as simple and trauma-informed as possible.

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Improvements implemented

The following improvements have already been made to the Scheme, in order from the most recent improvement to the oldest.

2024

July

- The Scheme established a **new team in Western Australia** to increase survivor's accessibility when applying, or thinking about applying for the Scheme, with contact hours extended to Australian Western Standard Time (AWST). Staff are available to answer enquiries about the Scheme and assist survivors to progress their application, including accessing support services. First Nations survivors calling in the region also have greater culturally appropriate and trauma-informed support as the Scheme's Indigenous Service Delivery Stream support has been bolstered with additional staff.

April

- The Scheme introduced **new Statement of Reasons templates** to be used by Independent Decision Makers (IDMs) to better structure their reasons for their decision for redress. All applicants will now receive the full Statement of Reasons with their outcome letter. Additionally, institutions will receive a copy of the redacted Statement of Reasons as relevant to that institution when the redress determination has been made.
- As part of the 'Application for Review of Determination form' **applicants can now provide additional information and documents** to the Scheme when requesting a **review of their determination**.
- A **'no worse off' provision has been implemented** to ensure redress offers cannot be reduced on review due to a differing interpretation by the reviewing IDM.
- The circumstances where applicants must undertake a **special assessment process have been reduced**.
- There are **no restrictions on survivors who apply for redress from gaol**. This includes current incarcerated survivors who can now apply for redress.
- The Scheme's **protected information framework was broadened** to enable the disclosure of protected information in select circumstances.

March

- **IDMs underwent refresher training** on administrative decision-making. The Scheme continues to improve training for IDMs.
- The Scheme provided **additional funding to Redress Support Services and knowmore Legal Service**. This will ensure there is continued support for survivors who are applying or considering applying to the Scheme until 30 June 2027.

January

- In order to assist survivors applying from gaol, the Scheme established a **team to support incarcerated survivors applying to the Scheme**. A dedicated phone line was also established in January 2024 to allow incarcerated survivors to contact the team directly. This is a free call and is available from all correctional centres, Australia wide.

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2023

December

- The Scheme released the updated **Application for Redress form**. The updated form is available in three formats, online via myGov which was also improved for accessibility, fillable PDF from the Scheme's website and paper copy.
- A **Redress Application Guidebook** was released to provide better support to survivors applying. The Guidebook includes detailed information and guidance about how to fill in the form and what to expect after the application is assessed for redress.
- The Scheme introduced in the updated Application of Redress form the option for applicants to **receive a text message when they have successfully lodged their application**. This applies to those who apply both online and via a paper-based form. Applicants can now be confident the Scheme has safely received their application.

October

- The Scheme introduced an **acknowledgement letter** for applicants who indicated postal as their communication preference. This letter confirms the applicant has lodged their application and outlines what the applicant can expect next from the Scheme. In June 2024, this letter was also introduced for those had a myGov preference and is delivered via myGov.

May

- 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 possible.
- 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 to improve how we support applicants.

March

- The Scheme has implemented a **new Complaints Management Framework**. The Framework will provide consistency in how 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

- 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.

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2022

December

- The Scheme introduced a **new payment by instalment SMS notification** that provides survivors with 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

- 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

- **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

- **The funder of last resort (FOLR) provisions was 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.

June 2022 – August 2021

- 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 includes funding for knowmore Legal Service to provide dedicated free financial counselling services to all redress survivors. In addition to the free advice and support they continue to offer survivors. This will improve access and support for people who are applying or considering applying to the Scheme.

June

- **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, improving the Direct Personal Response (DPR) process for survivors.

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May

- **Redress specific staff training and reporting on training** was mandated to ensure staff and external stakeholders are equipped with the most up-to-date information and skills to support survivors with their redress journey.

April

- To enhance the quality and consistency of decision making on redress applications, **a panel of Chief IDMs was appointed**. The Scheme has also introduced a de-identified application and decision database for IDMs to assist them with their decision making. The Scheme is also improving the training and resources that are available to IDMs.
- The Scheme introduced a new **DPR Information and Support Service**. The service assists survivors when they receive a DPR from institutions responsible for their abuse.

March

- System upgrades were implemented to allow **payments 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 have a witnessed statutory declaration was removed**. This will help remove a barrier for survivors to access redress.

January

- **A scheduled progress update call service** was introduced. This gives survivors the option to schedule calls with their case coordinator for updates on their application.
- The Scheme has **improved the way determinations are delivered** to survivors. The Scheme now schedules 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.

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2021

October

- 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 First Nations 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.
- Redress Support Services: A list of free, independent support services and their contact details are available on our [website](#). Redress 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.