



Australian Government

Australian Government Response
to the Royal Commission into
Institutional Responses to
Child Sexual Abuse



Factsheet

Australian Government Response

13 June 2018

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

This Royal Commission was Australia's longest running public inquiry. The Australian Government committed over \$500m to ensure the Royal Commission was able to fulfil its Terms of Reference.

On Friday 11 January 2013, the Terms of Reference were established and the six Commissioners appointed. The Commissioners were the Hon Justice Peter McClellan AM (Chair of the Royal Commission), Mr Bob Atkinson AO APM, Justice Jennifer Coate, Mr Robert Fitzgerald AM, Professor Helen Milroy and Mr Andrew Murray.

During the five years of the Royal Commission, 16,953 people within the Terms of Reference contacted the Royal Commission, 8,013 private sessions were held, 1,344 written accounts were received and 2,562 matters were referred to police.

Final Report

On 15 December 2017, the Royal Commission's Final Report was delivered to the Governor-General and tabled in Parliament. The Final Report is made up of 17 volumes, plus a preface and executive summary. The Final Report included 409 recommendations: 220 recommendations from three previous Royal Commission reports – *Working with Children Checks, Redress and Civil Litigation* and *Criminal Justice* – and 189 new recommendations. Recommendations addressed providing redress for the harm done to children who had experienced sexual abuse in institutions, and forward-looking recommendations to better protect children from sexual abuse, and to make institutions safer for children.

Australian Government Response

The Australian Government Response was tabled out of session in the Senate on 13 June 2018.

Of the 409 recommendations, 84 deal with redress matters which the Government is addressing through the establishment of the National Redress Scheme scheduled to commence on 1 July 2018. Of the remaining 325 recommendations, 122 were directed wholly or in part to the Australian Government. The Australian Government has accepted or accepted in principle 104 of these 122 recommendations, with the other 18 noted or requiring further consideration. The Government has not rejected any of the Royal Commission's recommendations. Details of the Government's position on each recommendation are included in the published Response.

The Response is published on the Attorney-General's Department website at www.ag.gov.au/carcresponse.

The Prime Minister's media release is available at: <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australian-government-response-royal-commission-institutional-responses-child-sexual-abuse>

Responses from state and territory governments and non-government institutions

Many of the recommendations were directed at state and territory governments or non-government institutions. The Australian Government expects non-government institutions will respond to each of the Royal Commission's recommendations, indicating what action they will take in response to them and will report on their implementation of relevant recommendations annually in December, along with all governments. Where institutions decide not to accept the Royal Commission's recommendations they should state so and why.

Developing the Australian Government Response

The Implementation Taskforce in the Attorney-General's Department coordinated the Australian Government Response in close collaboration with all relevant Australian Government departments and agencies. Recognising the breadth of engagement required to implement the Royal Commission's Recommendations, the Australian Government's interdepartmental committee overseeing the Response included senior officials from the departments of: the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Treasury, Finance, Defence, Home Affairs, Social Services, Human Services, Health, Education, Infrastructure, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Veterans' Affairs, Environment and Energy, Communications and the Arts, Jobs and Small Business and Industry. The Australian Federal Police, National Archives, National Children's Commissioner and Australian Border Force also contributed to the committee's work and to the Response.

Australian Government's key measures

- National Office for Child Safety
- National Redress Scheme
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Commonwealth Child Safe Framework
- Australian Government support for a database to share working with children checks outcomes
- Guiding Principles for Commonwealth entities when responding to civil claims concerning allegations of child sexual abuse
- A National Apology to be delivered on 22 October 2018

National priority recommendations

The Taskforce established an interjurisdictional working group with all state and territory governments to discuss recommendations that would benefit from national consistency or coordination. Key themes agreed as priorities by all jurisdictions were:

- supporting child safe organisations
- improving information sharing, record keeping and data collection
- addressing the complex issue of children with harmful sexual behaviours, and
- annually and publicly reporting on progress.

The Australian Government will continue to work with state and territory governments to progress implementation of recommendations, including relating to mandatory reporting and reportable conduct. All governments will continue to support national frameworks and strategies to continually improve child safety.

Monitoring and Reporting

As recommended by the Royal Commission, the Government will report on its progress in implementing the recommendations in December each year for the next five years and will also conduct a comprehensive review after 10 years. By December 2018, the Taskforce will have established a stand-alone webpage for reporting on progress towards implementing recommendations.