



Australian Government

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



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Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: Final Report

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Australian Government Response

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse: Final Report

The achievements of the Royal Commission and the commitments in this Australian Government Response are a tribute to the survivors and victims of institutional child sexual abuse, their families and supporters. Their courage has helped to create a culture of accountability and of trust in children's voices that will help all of us to take responsibility for keeping children safe and well.

The Australian Government has listened to the Royal Commission and to survivors and victims of institutional child sexual abuse. The Australian Government acknowledges that much more needs to be done to prevent and protect children from sexual abuse in institutions.

Cultural change in our institutions and society more broadly, is fundamental to ensuring the safety of our children. Changing our institutional cultures and providing the legal and practical safeguards to support that change will take some time. Many of Australia's governments and institutions have already acted to start that change, knowing that giving redress and comfort to survivors and protecting children into the future is urgent and cannot wait. In this response, the Australian Government has recognised and acknowledged that there must be change, but has also highlighted where genuine efforts at reform are being made.

On 15 December 2017, the Royal Commission submitted its Final Report to the Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd). The Final Report was tabled in the Australian Parliament the same day.

The Royal Commission recommended the Australian Government and all state and territory governments should issue a formal response to the Final Report within six months of it being tabled.

Of the 409 recommendations in the Final Report, 84 recommendations deal with redress, which the Australian Government is responding to through the creation of the National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse. Of the remaining 325 recommendations, 122 have been directed wholly or partially to the Australian Government. The Response accepts, or accepts in principle 104 of these 122 recommendations. The remaining 18 recommendations directed at the Australian Government are listed as being 'for further consideration' or are 'noted'. The Australian Government has not rejected any of the recommendations.

The Australian Government has also 'noted' some recommendations that fall within the leadership and responsibility of state and territory governments or that the Royal Commission directed to religious or other non-government institutions. The Australian Government will continue to work closely with all governments and institutions, including religious institutions,

to promote children's safety and wellbeing. Our expectation is that other governments and 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 the Australian, state and territory governments. Where other governments and institutions decide not to accept the Royal Commission's recommendations they should state so and why.

The Australian Government thanks the Commissioners, Mr Bob Atkinson AO APM, Justice Jennifer Coate, Mr Robert Fitzgerald AM, Professor Helen Milroy, Mr Andrew Murray and the Chair of the Royal Commission, the Hon Justice Peter McClellan AM, for their leadership and compassion throughout the Royal Commission and for delivering such a significant report for our nation. The Australian Government is grateful to the staff, expert witnesses, researchers, stakeholder groups, and government and non-government representatives who came forward to share their knowledge and experience. The Australian Government also acknowledges the spirit of commitment demonstrated by all state and territory governments during the Royal Commission and in working to address its recommendations. Most importantly, the Australian Government thanks the survivors and victims of institutional child sexual abuse, together with their families and supporters, for their courage and determination in telling their stories and for raising the awareness needed to protect our children.



The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister of Australia



The Hon Christian Porter MP
Attorney-General