



ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

RESPONSE BY
MINISTER MCGURK ON BEHALF OF
THE GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

JUNE 2018

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FOREWORD

I commend the Hon Justice Peter McClellan AM and the other Commissioners for their tireless efforts and dedication to the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission).

For five years, the Royal Commission uncovered trauma inflicted upon childhood after childhood. The experiences that emerged were alarming. For many survivors, the impact has been continuous and inescapable.

Their stories shone truth on what has been hidden for a long time – historic and contemporary cases of child sexual abuse within institutions, and a concealment of evidence that has provided a refuge and protection for offenders.

These experiences and stories cannot be ignored.

When the McGowan Government provided a Statement of Intent at the time of the delivery of the Final Report, we made a commitment to respond to historical abuse that has occurred, prevent further abuse from happening in the future, and ensure a swift response to abuse should it occur again. This commitment still stands.

It has been evident in our passage of the *Civil Liability Legislation Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse Actions) Act 2018*, which ends the limitation periods for all civil actions by victims of child sex abuse, and our commitment to the National Redress Scheme.

Six months have now passed since the Royal Commission presented its 409 recommendations to Governments and non-government institutions across Australia. This report outlines the McGowan Government's response to each of those recommendations.

Of the 409 recommendations put forward by the Royal Commission, 289 have been accepted or accepted in principle, 21 subject to further consideration, and 99 noted as not being applicable to the State Government. There are no recommendations that have not been accepted by the McGowan Government.

The Royal Commission has been challenging and confronting, but it will create significant change, and I want to take this opportunity to personally thank those who have dedicated themselves to this very important cause.

The courage of survivors to share their experiences must be met by all organisations' acknowledgement of past failures, and a commitment to address previous injustices and implement the significant changes required to protect our children. This cannot be left to Government alone.

All institutions that work with children must commit to honouring the work of the Royal Commission, and ensuring that history does not repeat itself.

Change will not be instant, but we are committed because the importance of this work is clear: keeping children safe is the highest priority.



The McGowan Government will now work towards the delivery of a staged implementation plan, which will articulate reform priorities, implementation timeframes and resourcing options. Priority will be given to implementing recommendations using existing resources, however policy changes requiring additional funds may be considered as a part of future State Budget processes.

We will ensure that this work is collaborative, methodical and rigorous because the McGowan Government is committed to building a community where children are safe. I invite the entire community to be part of the solution laid out by the Royal Commission.



SIMONE MCGURK MLA

Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services

This response may contain material that is confronting and distressing. If you require support, please [click on this link](#) to a list of available support services. The Royal Commission's Final Report and other publications can be accessed by [clicking on this link](#).

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1 CONTEXT

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission) was established in January 2013, to investigate systemic failures of public and private institutions to protect children from child sexual abuse, report abuse, and respond to child sexual abuse. The Royal Commission's Terms of Reference required it to identify what institutions should do better to protect children in the future, as well as what should be done to:

- achieve best practice in reporting and responding to reports of child sexual abuse;
- eliminate impediments in responding to sexual abuse; and
- address the impact of past and future institutional child sexual abuse.

Throughout the five years of the Royal Commission's inquiry, the Western Australian Government (the State Government) strongly supported the work of the Royal Commission, presenting detailed evidence and submissions and participating in public hearings, case studies and roundtables.

The Royal Commission released four reports: *Working With Children Checks* (August 2015); *Redress and Civil Litigation* (September 2015); *Criminal Justice* (August 2017); and the *Final Report* (December 2017).

In all, the Royal Commission made 409 recommendations to prevent and respond to institutional child sexual abuse through reform to policy, legislation, administration, and institutional structures. These recommendations are directed to Australian governments and institutions, and non-government institutions.

Of the 409 recommendations, 310 recommendations are applicable to the State Government. The State Government has examined the 310 applicable recommendations, and provided a comprehensive and considered response to these recommendations, taking into account the systems and protections the State Government has already implemented.

This response fulfils Royal Commission recommendation 17.1, that all governments should issue a formal response within six months of the *Final Report's* release, indicating whether recommendations are accepted; accepted in principle; not accepted; or will require further consideration.

The State Government also commits to working on the recommendations of the Royal Commission with the Commonwealth Government, other states and territories, local government, non-government institutions (including religious institutions) and community organisations.

Of the 99 recommendations that are not applicable to the State Government:

- 58 recommendations are for religious institutions specifically;
- 9 recommendations are for 'non-government institutions';
- 29 recommendations are for the Commonwealth Government;
- 2 recommendations are for other state governments; and
- 1 recommendation refers to legislation that is not applicable in Western Australia.

The State Government recognises that everyone in our community has a role to play in preventing child sexual abuse. As such, the State Government calls on non-government institutions and community organisations, including churches, religious schools, charities, and non-government social and welfare services, to match the State Government's strong commitment to progressing the Royal Commission's recommendations. A concerted response from these key institutions and organisations will be required so that the safety of children and young people is ensured across all institutions in Western Australia.

2 OVERVIEW

The State Government commits to addressing the findings of the Royal Commission. The State Government is committed to:

- addressing historical abuse that occurred;
- preventing abuse from happening in the future; and
- identifying and responding swiftly to abuse should it happen again.

2.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle over 90 per cent of the applicable recommendations

Of the 409 recommendations made by the Royal Commission, 310 are applicable to the State Government. The State Government has accepted or accepted in principle over 90 per cent of the 310 applicable recommendations. Some of these recommendations have already been addressed through past work, and for others, work has already commenced. Highlights from this work are included in case studies throughout this document.



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse



The State Government's response to the Royal Commission's 409 recommendations is presented in two ways:

- this document presents the State Government's response discussed under nine themes; and
- a reconciliation of responses to each of the 409 recommendations. This can be accessed by clicking on the following link: www.dpc.wa.gov.au/childabuseroyalcommission.

2.1.1 The State Government is participating in a national response

Fifty-four of the Royal Commission recommendations that apply to the State Government require intergovernmental collaboration. The State Government is working with a number of inter-jurisdictional groups to progress these recommendations at a national level. In particular, the State Government is contributing to the Commonwealth Government's Implementation Taskforce, to maintain oversight of national processes, and coordinate intergovernmental responses to the recommendations. Within this forum, governments have agreed to progress the following four themes as national priorities:

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

2.2 Profile of the State Government's response

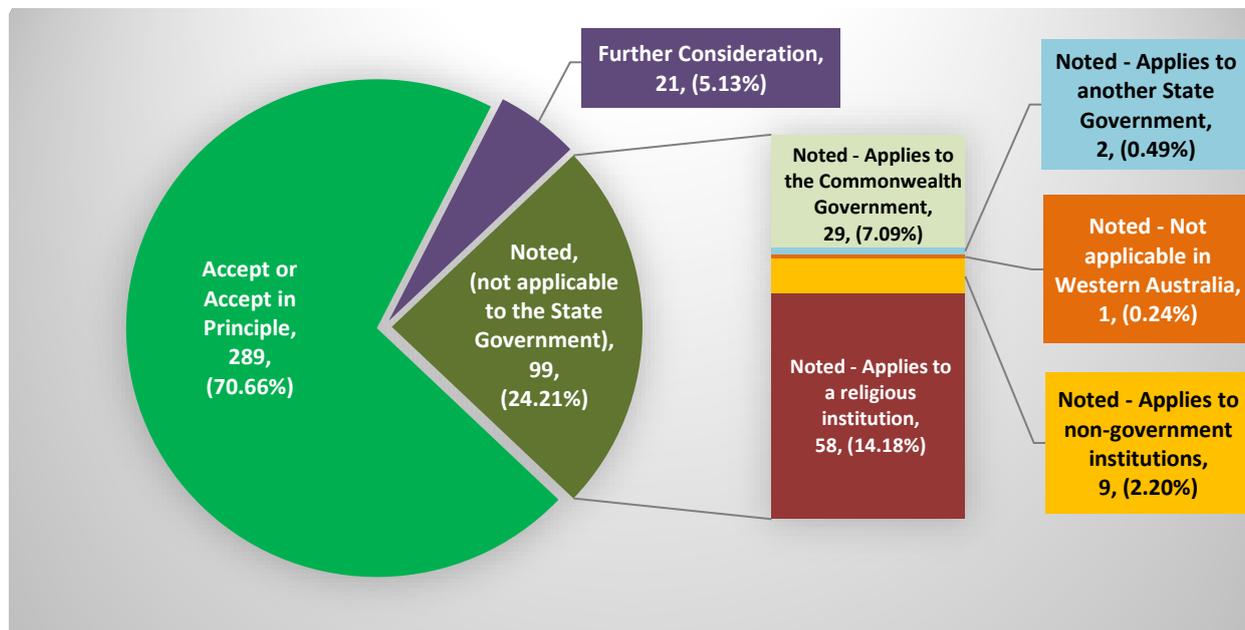
The State Government has collaborated with the Commonwealth Government and other states and territories to reach agreement on nationally consistent language for responding to recommendations. The nationally agreed responses, which have been applied to this response, are as follows:

Response	Definition
Accept	All elements of the recommendation are supported by the State Government.
In principle	The State Government generally supports the intent or merit of the policy underlining the recommendation, but does not necessarily support the method for achieving the policy; and/or additional funding will be required to implement the recommendation.
Further consideration	Further analysis is required before the State Government can decide whether it supports the recommendation.
Noted	The recommendation does not fall within the State Government's jurisdiction (e.g. the recommendation relates to the Commonwealth or to a non-government institution such as a religious institution).
Not accept	The recommendation is not supported by the State Government.

Figure 1 provides a profile of the State Government's response to the 409 recommendations.

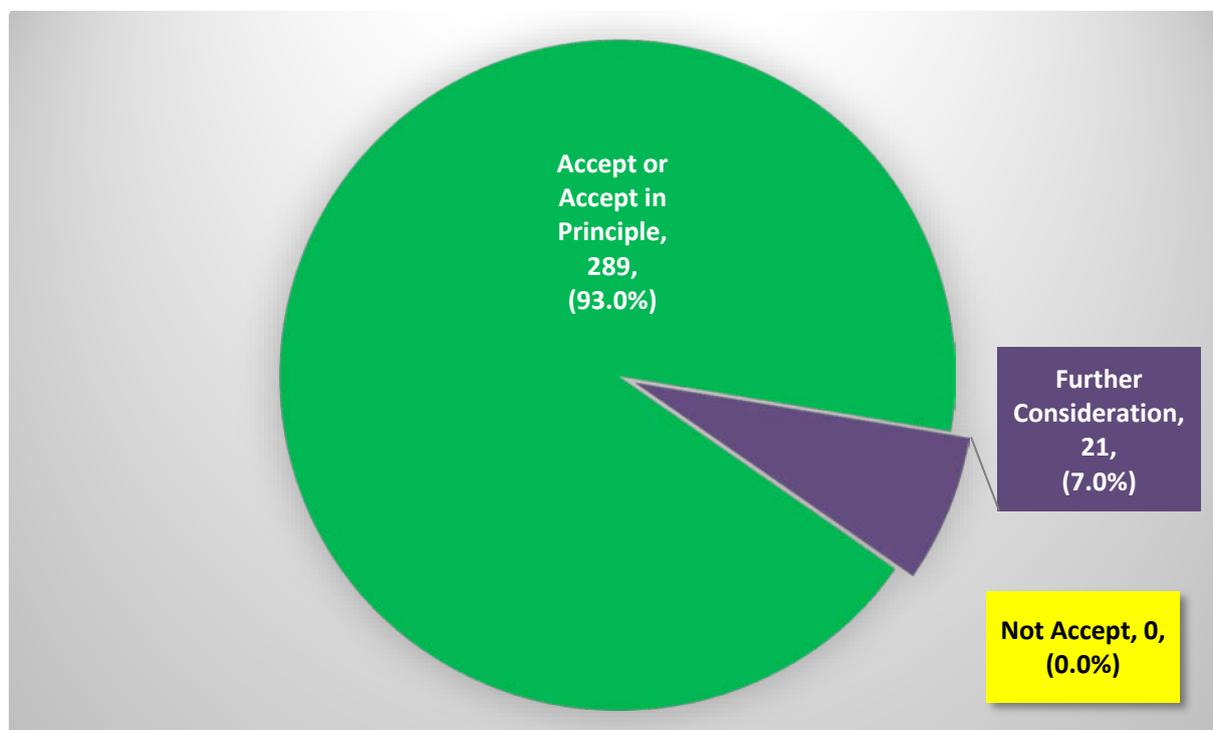
Figure 2 provides a profile of the 310 recommendations that are applicable to the State Government only.

Figure 1: Profile of State Government response to all 409 recommendations



* Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding

Figure 2: Profile of State Government response to the 310 recommendations that are applicable the State Government



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3 WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

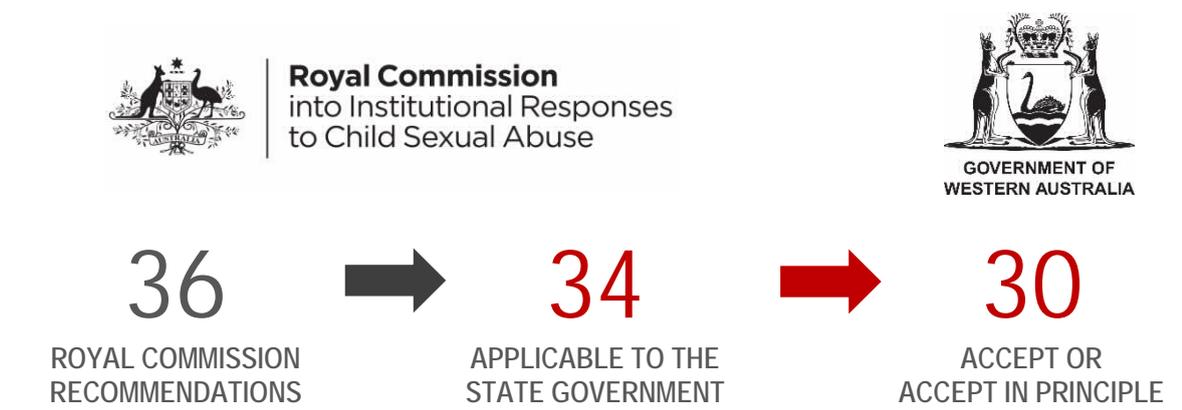
The Working With Children Check is a screening strategy that aims to safeguard children by identifying people with the kinds of criminal histories that indicate they may pose a risk of harm to children, prohibiting them from engaging in certain types of work that involves children.

In Australia, all states and territories have a Working With Children Check scheme. Western Australia's Working With Children Check Scheme is compulsory and includes an Expanded National Police History Check and consideration of any information relevant to the risk an applicant may pose to children. Applicants' criminal records are also monitored for the life of their card.

3.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 30 of the 34 applicable recommendations related to Working With Children Checks

The Royal Commission made 36 recommendations relating to Working With Children Checks. These recommendations appeared in the Royal Commission's *Working With Children Checks* report (released in August 2015).

Thirty-four of the 36 recommendations apply to the State Government. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 30 of these recommendations.



The State Government needs to give further consideration to four of the 34 applicable recommendations. The State Government supports the intent of the two recommendations that serious adult criminal history should, as a general rule, result in the refusal of a Working with Children Card. Not all serious criminal history, however, is indicative of a risk to children, and there are circumstances where discretion is appropriate and should be retained. This requires further consideration in regards to national consistency and how the appeals process applies.

The recommendation to process Working with Children Card applications within five working days and no longer than 21 working days for more complex cases also needs further consideration to ensure the comprehensive behaviour assessment undertaken in Western Australia is not compromised.

Lastly, the State Government needs to further consider the recommendations regarding the full portability of Working With Children Checks to ensure the strong protections currently in place for children in Western Australia are not reduced.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS: LEADING PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Through work undertaken by the Department of Communities, Western Australia is a leader among Australian states and territories in the implementation of Royal Commission recommendations relating to Working With Children Checks.

Faster processing through online renewals

The Department of Communities implemented an online process in January 2016 to process renewals more quickly. Approximately 70 per cent of renewals now occur online. Positive feedback has been received from customers. The average time taken to finalise Working With Children Check applications in Western Australia has reduced from approximately 20 calendar days (where there was no criminal record) and 40 days (where there was a criminal record) to 4-5 days and 18-19 days respectively.

The State Government is currently considering how Working With Children Check applications can be further expedited through the use of online applications and the introduction of a similar work screening system for those providing services to vulnerable people under the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Progress towards a national database and improving access to information

Information sharing is clearly a vital component of any Working With Children Check Scheme to maximise its potential to protect children from potential future harm and to ensure evidence based decision-making. The State Government is working with the Commonwealth Government and other states and territories to address barriers preventing access to information relevant to Working With Children Check decisions, to enhance the protection of children.

The State Government is an active member of a working group established by the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department to progress the *Working With Children Check Report* recommendations, including those that relate to information sharing.

In December 2017, the Commonwealth Government requested jurisdictions' commitment to fund the ongoing cost of a central database and any associated integration costs to enable states and territories to interact with this database. The State Government has given its in-principle support for the centralised database.

For more information on the Working With Children Check Screening Unit see:

<https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/>

4 REDRESS AND CIVIL LITIGATION

Governments and institutions can never adequately right the past wrongs that vulnerable children have endured within institutions. While the pain and suffering that survivors of sexual abuse have experienced cannot ever be taken away, the Royal Commission made significant findings about the importance of having avenues available for survivors to pursue justice, healing and recognition.

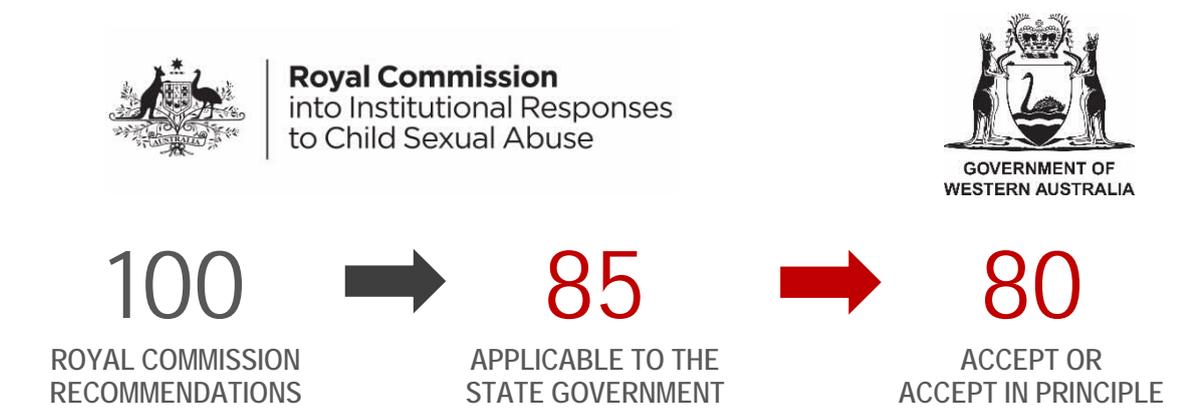
The Royal Commission recommended the establishment of a nation-wide redress scheme for survivors. Under the scheme, survivors could seek an ex-gratia payment in recognition of sexual abuse suffered within an institution, a personal apology and access to therapeutic counselling.

In addition, the Royal Commission recommended profound changes to civil litigation laws around Australia, allowing survivors of historical child sexual abuse to make legal claims for damages for the wrongs done to them in the past.

4.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 80 of the 85 applicable recommendations related to redress and civil litigation reform

The Royal Commission made 100 recommendations related to redress and civil litigation, 99 of which appeared in its *Redress and Civil Litigation* report (released in September 2015) and one civil litigation recommendation which appeared in its *Criminal Justice* report.

Eighty-five of these 100 recommendations apply to the State Government. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 80 of these recommendations.



4.1.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 69 of the applicable recommendations related to redress for survivors of child sexual abuse

Of the 85 recommendations that apply to the State Government, 69 recommendations relate to redress for survivors of sexual abuse. The State Government accept or accepts in principle all 69 recommendations.

In November 2016, the Commonwealth Government announced that it would establish a redress scheme for survivors who were abused in Commonwealth institutions. At this time, the Commonwealth also announced that other governments and non-government institutions (such as religious institutions) could join the scheme by opting in.

Through the establishment of the National Redress Scheme, the Commonwealth Government decided how it would progress the recommendations of the Royal Commission in regards to redress.

The State Government has agreed to join the National Redress Scheme. For the purposes of this document, it has been identified that the State Government has accepted or accepted in principle all 69 recommendations relating to how governments implement the Royal Commission recommendations about redress for survivors of child sexual abuse.

However, the State Government acknowledges that a number of National Redress Scheme elements, as established by the Commonwealth, differ from the recommendations made by the Royal Commission, in particular, recommendations about the maximum payment under the scheme, and the delivery of counselling and psychological care under the scheme.

THE STATE GOVERNMENT JOINS THE NATIONAL REDRESS SCHEME FOR SURVIVORS OF INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

After extensive negotiation with the Commonwealth Government, the State Government is pleased to announce that it will be joining the National Redress Scheme.

The State Government will table legislation in coming months but survivors will be able to apply for redress once the scheme begins on 1 July 2018.

This means that at least 2,400 people abused in State Government institutions will be able to apply to the National Redress Scheme. Another 3,300 would be able to apply if all non-government institutions, including churches and other non-government organisations that operated services for children in Western Australia, opt in to the scheme.

The State Government is urging all churches and non-government organisations to join the scheme without any further delay. This will ensure that all survivors in Western Australia can receive the redress they deserve.

Redress aims to acknowledge the harm caused to people who experienced institutional sexual abuse as children, and to support people to move forward positively in a way that is best for them. The State Government wants to ensure that survivors are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve and so that they can get the support they need.

Applying to the National Redress Scheme is an alternative to getting compensation through the courts. Survivors will have access to one or the other, but not both.

For more information on the National Redress Scheme see:

<https://www.dss.gov.au/national-redress-scheme-for-people-who-have-experienced-institutional-child-sexual-abuse>

4.1.2 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 11 of the 16 recommendations related to civil litigation reform

Of the 85 recommendations that apply to the State Government about redress and civil litigation, 16 recommendations relate to civil litigation reform. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 11 of these 16 recommendations.

The State Government needs to give further consideration to five recommendations. In recommendation 89 of the *Redress and Civil Litigation Report*, (and discussed further in recommendations 90 – 93), the Royal Commission recommended that a non-delegable duty should be imposed on certain institutions for institutional child sexual abuse, despite the abuse being a criminal act of a person associated with the institution.

The introduction of such a duty would represent a significant departure from well-established principles in torts law. Therefore, the State Government needs to consult extensively before it can be in a position to support the recommendations in this section. As part of the consultation process, the State Government will also consider whether it will introduce legislation to reverse the onus of proof so that institutions will be liable for child sexual abuse by persons associated with the institution unless the institution proves it took reasonable steps to prevent the abuse.

If these suggested reforms are implemented, they will likely be introduced simultaneously. Therefore, these recommendations are being considered concurrently.

THE CIVIL LIABILITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ACTIONS) ACT 2018 (WA)

The Western Australian Parliament passed the Civil Liability Legislation Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse Actions) Bill 2017 (WA) (the Bill) on 10 April 2018.

Prior to this change in law, most survivors of child sexual abuse have been unable to sue for damages because legislation barred the commencement of civil action after a set time period.

Amendments to the *Limitation Act 2005 (WA)* remove limitation periods altogether for people who have suffered child sexual abuse. This will apply retrospectively (to cases of child sexual abuse in the past) and prospectively (to any new cases of child sexual abuse). This removal of time barriers is necessary because, as the Royal Commission found, children who suffer sexual abuse take an average of 22 years to disclose their abuse.

Once in operation (from July 2018), the Act will also establish a framework to overcome the difficulties some survivors have encountered when identifying a proper defendant. For instance, survivors will now have a legal basis to sue an unincorporated institution in the name of the institution's current office holder, despite the cause of action having accrued against a former office holder. This will be a first for Australia.

Further, if a current office holder is liable under a judgment or settlement of a child sexual abuse action, the Act permits the office holder to satisfy the liability out of assets held by or for the office or the institution, including assets of a trust.

The Act also includes various other provisions which will bolster the legal position of survivors, ensuring legal costs incurred in bringing civil proceedings are kept to a minimum.

Additionally, *Whole-of-State Government Guidelines* have been developed containing principles and procedures the State Government should apply in responding to claims. The Guidelines do not prevent the State Government and its agencies from defending claims.

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5 POLICING

Reporting sexual abuse to authorities is a harrowing step for any person, whether the experience of being abused is recent or historical. Police officers provide the entry point to the criminal justice system, and as such it is vital that officers are sensitive, respectful and informative. Specially trained police are required for interviews and investigations involving child complainants. Procedures such as video recorded interviews can be undertaken so a child does not have to retell their abuse and give evidence in court. Other vulnerable groups, such as people with disability and people of diverse cultural backgrounds who become victims of sexual abuse must also be heard with respect and understanding, and offered extra support where needed.

5.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 13 of the recommendations related to policing

The Royal Commission made 13 recommendations related to policing. These recommendations appeared in the Royal Commission's *Criminal Justice* report.

All 13 recommendations apply to the State Government. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 13 of these recommendations.



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse



GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

13

ROYAL COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATIONS



13

APPLICABLE TO THE
STATE GOVERNMENT



13

ACCEPT OR
ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE

POLICING: LEADING PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Supporting complainants through staffing continuity

Staffing continuity and keeping regular communication with complainants in the investigation of child sexual abuse allegations are important. The Western Australia Police Force tenure policy for detectives investigating child sexual abuse requires that investigating officers serve a minimum of two years and a maximum of four years in one location before being required to transfer from their respective areas. Complex investigations involving child sexual abuse remain with original investigating officers.

Expert support for complainants who are children

The Western Australia Police Force Child Assessment and Interview Team works closely with child interviewers from the Department of Communities. The team consists of a number of specially trained child interviewers whose role it is to conduct interviews with child victims of sexual abuse. Training for interviewers covers theories of child development, trauma, developmental milestones, brain development, memory, language and complex communication needs.

Pre-recording of children's evidence

Western Australia is widely regarded as leading the country in respect to legislation which allows for the pre-recording of evidence in child sexual abuse investigations, which is recommended by the Royal Commission. The Western Australian *Evidence Act 1906* allows for the visual recording of interviews with children. This measure reduces the traumatic effect of having to give evidence in court.

Laying charges at earliest opportunity and not requiring witness corroboration

Child sexual abuse offences occur in private and are difficult to corroborate. The Royal Commission advocated that the decision to lay charges for child sexual abuse should be made correctly, as early as possible, and that police should not require corroboration. The Western Australia Police Force accepts this recommendation, and is cognisant of the various reasons as to why witness corroboration may not be available or appropriate in child and adult sexual offence investigations.

Referring victims to support services

Recommendations about referring victims of sexual abuse to appropriate support services are accepted or accepted in principle. In relation to these recommendations, the Western Australia Police Force provides support, and facilitates access to further services for victims of crime in accordance with the *Victims of Crime Act 1994* (WA).

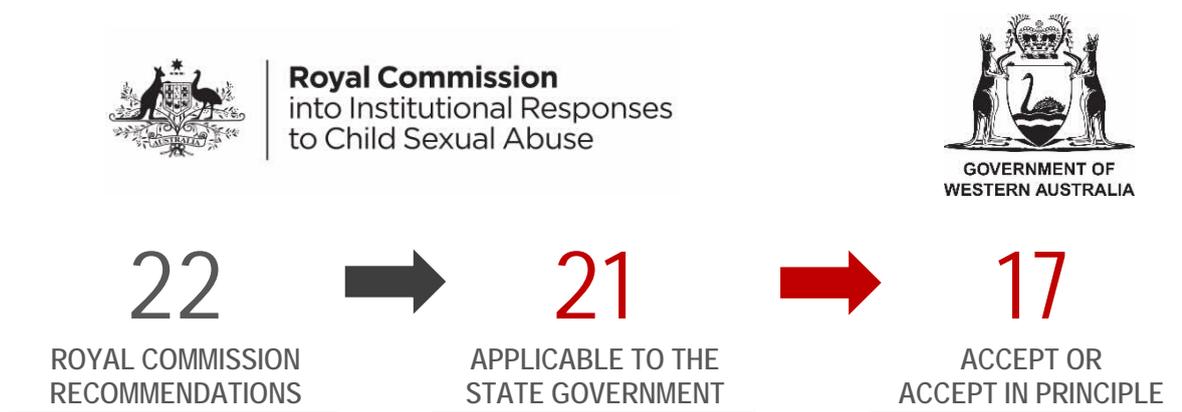
6 CRIMINAL OFFENCES, SENTENCING AND APPEALS

Our justice system criminalises and punishes conduct that sexually exploits or sexually harms children. As community awareness and expectations change over time, additional types of sexual offending against children, and third party offences of failing to protect children or report abuse, are considered for inclusion within criminal legislation. In sentencing offenders, it is imperative that the justice system delivers the right punishment and treatment for offenders, deters future offending, and ensures strong protection for the community.

6.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 17 of the 21 applicable recommendations related to criminal offences, sentencing and appeals

The Royal Commission made 22 recommendations related to criminal offences, sentencing and appeals. These recommendations appeared in the Royal Commission's *Criminal Justice* report.

Twenty-one of these 22 recommendations apply to the State Government. The State Government has accepted or accepted in principle 17 of these recommendations.



Of the 21 recommendations that apply to the State Government:

- 13 recommendations are related to criminal offences. The State Government has accepted or accepted in-principle 9 of these recommendations.
- 4 recommendations are related to sentencing. The State Government has accepted or accepted in-principle all 4 of these recommendations; and
- 4 recommendations are related to appeals. The State Government has accepted or accepted in-principle all 4 of these recommendations.

The State Government needs to give further consideration to four recommendations related to criminal offences. These recommendations relate to the application of mandatory reporting laws and the introduction of offences of failure to report, and failure to protect, that would also apply to religious personnel. These recommendations will require a national response.

CRIMINAL OFFENCES, SENTENCING AND APPEALS: LEADING PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Western Australian legislation already meets the standards for criminal offences, sentencing and appeals set by the Royal Commission recommendations.

For example, consistent with the Royal Commission's recommendation 27, existing offences relating to sexual contact between a child and a person who is in a position of authority do not require that the offender abused his or her position in order to initiate the contact; only that the person was in a position of authority.

Similarly, when handing down sentences for child sex offending that comprises multiple discrete episodes or multiple victims, Western Australian courts already expressly indicate what sentences would have been handed down for each offence had they been dealt with in isolation, as recommended by the Royal Commission.

There is scope to build on existing offences to achieve the coverage recommended by the Royal Commission. For example, the Western Australian *Criminal Code Act 1913* (the Criminal Code) already criminalises certain forms of grooming and persistent sexual conduct, although not with the breadth of application advocated by the Royal Commission. The State Government supports the underlying policy position but recognises the need to carefully manage interactions between the Royal Commission's specific proposals, and the existing offences and structure of the Criminal Code and other legislation.

Where recommendations have been accepted or accepted in principle, consultation will commence within the criminal justice agencies in order to develop a Cabinet Submission in early 2019, seeking approval to make the appropriate changes to the Criminal Code.

7 CRIMINAL TRIALS

Trial experiences for complainants in child sexual abuse cases are by their nature intimidating and distressing. The Royal Commission, while recognising an accused's right to a fair trial, called for more to be done to support a complainant through the trial process. This includes ensuring prosecution staff are trained in the nature of child sexual abuse, and that complainants are kept informed about their case and what to expect at trial.

The Royal Commission also recommended that special measures that reduce the stress of giving evidence in court should be employed, such as prerecording evidence, recording trial evidence for any future retrial, and using intermediaries (trained professionals who support vulnerable witnesses through the trial process) in child sexual abuse prosecutions. In addition, the Royal Commission recommended that evidence demonstrating a disposition of a defendant to commit particular kinds of offences should be admissible in child sexual abuse trials.

7.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 33 of the 37 applicable recommendations related to criminal trials

The Royal Commission made 38 recommendations related to child sexual abuse criminal trials within its *Criminal Justice* report.

Thirty-seven of these 38 recommendations apply to the State Government. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 33 of these recommendations.



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse



38

ROYAL COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATIONS



37

APPLICABLE TO THE
STATE GOVERNMENT



33

ACCEPT OR
ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE

Of the 37 recommendations applying to the State Government:

- 7 recommendations relate to prosecution processes. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all seven of these recommendations.
- 8 recommendations relate to evidence. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle six of these recommendations.
- 12 recommendations relate to the prerecording of child evidence and other special measures to assist children during the trial process. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 12 of these recommendations.
- 10 recommendations relate to judicial and procedural responses. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle eight of these recommendations.

The State Government needs to give further consideration to four of the 37 recommendations. Two of these recommendations relate to the admissibility of evidence and two recommendations are related to directions and warnings to be given by a member of the judiciary to a jury in a sexual abuse trial. The State Government will continue to discuss with the Judiciary the potential impact of these before arriving at a response to the relevant recommendations.

CRIMINAL TRIALS: LEADING PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The Child Witness Service

The Child Witness Service (CWS) recognises that all children are vulnerable witnesses by virtue of their age and aims to minimise the risk of further trauma as a result of a child's involvement in the court process. This is a holistic service to children and families for the whole duration of the court process. CWS offices are located in secure locations within courts with co-located closed-circuit television facilities, providing a safe and child friendly environment.

CWS receives over 1,000 referrals annually state-wide and provides services to all child complainants and witnesses in all criminal jurisdictions. Sixty per cent of these offences are child sexual abuse cases.

Once a referral is received, the family is contacted and an initial appointment is offered. CWS is proactive in engaging with the child and family to provide court related information and to keep them informed of the progress of their case. An assessment is undertaken of the child's needs to ensure they receive all benefits of the legislation.

CWS will advocate for children who are not automatically entitled to Special Witness Status, (SWS) which currently includes all witnesses. If a child is required to give evidence they are provided with practical and emotional court preparation tailored to their individual needs.

CWS also advocates for child complainants and witnesses to pre-record their evidence. In the last 12 months ending April 2018 there were 118 pre-recordings, which was a 38 percent increase on the previous year. A pre-recording allows children to complete their role as a witness with less delay relating to court proceedings, minimising the impact of fatigue, concentration difficulties and allowing complex emotional needs (including anxiety, self-harm, post-traumatic stress and some disabilities such as autism) to be managed more effectively. This is a child-focused process as opposed to giving evidence at trial where a child may be subject to lengthy waiting times, adjournments, giving evidence late in the day or over multiple days, where fatigue and anxiety may impact on their ability to give evidence.

A new initiative of the District Court is to conduct ground rules hearings for very young children to raise awareness of individual needs in relation to communication or any other special needs of the child. CWS provides an assessment report to the presiding judge to recommend guidelines which will assist the judge to formulate ground rules for the special hearing. This has been very effective in ensuring cross-examination is appropriate for children and these rules have contributed towards child-focused pre-recording. There have now been five ground rules hearings. This initiative is a pre-cursor to an intermediary scheme as recommended by the Royal Commission.

For more information about the Child Witness Service see:

<http://www.victimsofcrime.wa.gov.au/C/child.aspx?uid=0883-9898-1908-9198>

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8 CHILD SAFE INSTITUTIONS

All institutions engaged in child-related work have a duty to keep children safe. The community expects that institutions will take appropriate steps to promote the safety and wellbeing of all children with whom they engage. This can be achieved by ensuring the best interests of the child are the primary consideration in their operations, that their cultures and practices create an environment that prevents abuse from occurring, and that, where abuse does occur, it is identified and responded to appropriately.

In particular, institutions that engage with children who are vulnerable need to have rigorous measures in place to protect these children from abuse. State Government oversight and regulatory mechanisms can support all institutions through building their capacity to be child safe, and by monitoring and enforcing agreed frameworks and standards.

8.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 36 applicable recommendations related to child safe institutions

The Royal Commission made 51 recommendations related to child safety within institutions. These recommendations are found in *Volume 6* of the Final Report (Making Institutions Child Safe); *Volume 13* (Schools); *Volume 14* (Sport, Recreation, Arts, Culture, Community and Hobby Groups); and *Volume 15* (Contemporary Detention Environments).

Thirty-six of these 51 recommendations apply to the State Government. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 36 recommendations.

The Royal Commission made 15 recommendations about making institutions child safe that do not apply to the State Government. These recommendations are directed to the Commonwealth Government.



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8.1.1 Participation in national work to deliver safety for children in institutions

The State Government has committed to work with Commonwealth and state and territory governments to develop a National Statement of Child Safe Principles based on the recommended Child Safe Standards. This National Statement will then be used to improve child safety in all institutions that engage in child-related work in Western Australia.

Recommendations on institutional child safety also include that an independent oversight body be responsible for monitoring and enforcing the Child Safe Standards. Consideration of how independent oversight could be implemented in Western Australia will be carried out in the remainder of 2018. The State Government will take into account Western Australia's existing frameworks that exceed the proposed Child Safe Standards.

The State Government is actively participating in the Child Abuse Royal Commission Implementation Taskforce to progress recommendations about supporting child safe organisations.

The State Government also looks forward to working with the Commonwealth in the development of a National Framework for Child Safety, as recommended in Volume 6 of the *Final Report*, and will continue to provide support to local governments in relation to child safety.

CHILD SAFE INSTITUTIONS: LEADING PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Safe Clubs 4 Kids Initiative

The Safe Clubs 4 Kids initiative is a partnership between the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, WA Sports Federation, the Working with Children Screening Unit – Department of Communities, the Western Australia Police Force – Child Abuse Squad and Surf Life Saving WA. These partnerships are invaluable for the sport and recreation industry.

Safe Clubs 4 Kids aims to encourage and support the sport and active recreation industry to create and maintain safe environments for children and young people. User friendly resources are available on the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries website, encouraging State Sporting Associations and affiliated clubs to put in place four considerations:

- Making rules clear – which involves ensuring policies, procedures and guidelines are clear, followed and easily accessible by all and that there are clear processes for responding to child abuse.
- Getting the right people – which involves following an appropriate screening procedure to recruit the right people, including Working With Children Checks.
- Involving children and young people – encouraging an open culture where all members know how and where to give feedback, raise concerns and feel confident the club will respond; advising children and young people of their right to feel safe and encouraging them to provide input on what they think would make a great club; regularly promoting that the club prioritises the safety of children and young people.
- Learning and responding – which involves having an understanding of children’s needs and appropriate responses to any concerns, including reporting.

The resources include brochures, videos, posters, fact sheets and the option to attend workshops which assist State Sporting Associations and their affiliates clubs to:

- increase awareness about how to create child safe environments;
- understand the importance of criminal record checks, including Working With Children Checks; and
- learn how to respond to and report a disclosure or suspicion of child abuse.

Information on Safe Clubs 4 Kids can be found at:

<http://www.dsr.wa.gov.au/support-and-advice/safety-and-integrity-in-sport/sportsafe/safe-clubs-4-kids>

Guidelines and training for child safe organisations

Since 2015, the Western Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People has worked with the State Government and non-government sectors to develop and implement guidelines for making organisations child safe. This includes a suite of resources and training for organisations, including resources for parents and children. To date, more than 550 people representing 230 different organisations have attended this training. The Commissioner’s office has worked closely with the Royal Commission to ensure this work is consistent with their recommendations relating to developing child safe institutions.

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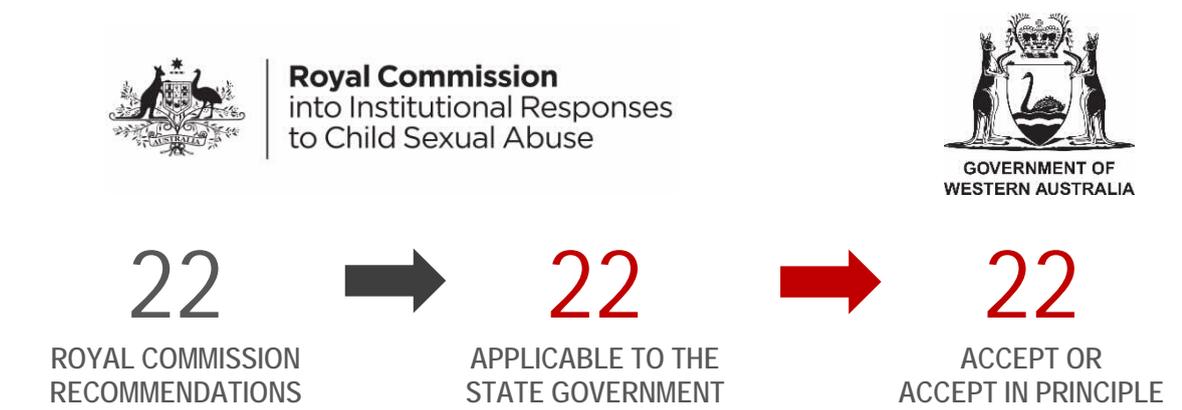
9 OUT-OF-HOME CARE

Parents provide for the protection and care of the vast majority of Western Australia's children. Where a child is not receiving that protection and care from their parents, the State Government has a duty to take action to protect them. As a last resort, and where a child's best interest necessitates it, action can include the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Communities taking on parental responsibility for their protection and care. While the intent of out-of-home care is to provide children with a safe, stable and caring environment, these children are particularly vulnerable, and the risks of sexual abuse must be eliminated.

9.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 22 of the applicable recommendations related to out-of-home care

The Royal Commission made 22 recommendations related to contemporary out-of-home care in *Volume 12* of the Final Report (Contemporary Out-of-Home-Care).

All 22 recommendations apply to the State Government. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 22 of these recommendations.



OUT-OF-HOME CARE: LEADING PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Strengthening kinship/relative care

The Royal Commission has recommended that each state and territory adopt a model of assessment appropriately tailored for kinship/relative care, and in doing so acknowledges that there are essential differences to other care types that need to be recognised and incorporated into the model of assessment. The Department of Communities is progressing a range of reform actions for family carers under *Building a Better Future: Out of Home Care Reform* in Western Australia including reviewing family carer assessment to be more inclusive, understandable and appropriate, as well as enhancing training modules.

Improving stability of placements

As part of out-of-home care reform, the Care Team Approach Practice Framework was developed to maintain and support a child's care arrangement and their continued connection to parents, siblings, their wider family, network, community and culture. The emphasis is to create stability and reduce the disruption to lifelong connections and maintain and increase naturally occurring networks that the child belonged to before coming into care.

Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander care

Improving outcomes for Aboriginal children and families in the child protection system is an established priority. The Royal Commission recommends that each government, in consultation with Aboriginal communities, should develop plans to fully implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle. This Principle recognises the importance of connection to family, community, culture and country and asserts that self-determining communities are central to supporting and maintaining those connections. The Department of Communities is progressing a range of recommendations from the legislative review of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (WA) to strengthen compliance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle through the five core elements of prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection. These include a particular focus on improving outcomes for Aboriginal children in care by establishing avenues in the legislation for increasing the participation and involvement of Aboriginal people in decision making.

Independent oversight

The Department of Communities is progressing towards independent oversight of the safety standards (within *Better Care, Better Services*) by an independent oversight body. This work will be useful in considering the range of oversight mechanisms recommended by the Royal Commission including mandatory accreditation of out-of-home care service providers, oversight of child safe standards and reportable conduct schemes.

10 RESPONDING AND REPORTING, RECORD KEEPING AND INFORMATION SHARING

Distress and trauma suffered by survivors can be exacerbated by delays in or failures to identify and respond to risks and incidents of child sexual abuse. The Royal Commission made recommendations aimed at improving the handling of complaints by institutions, and establishing independent oversight of complaint handling by certain institutions.

When risks or incidents of child sexual abuse are identified, it is important that these are reported promptly and that these reports lead to swift, consistent and appropriate responses that minimise the trauma to the survivor. Procedures for reporting need to be simple, reliable and supportive. Reporting and responding roles need to be clearly defined and well understood. To assist reporting and responding, accurate recordkeeping, responsive procedures for accessing records and effective information sharing are crucial.

10.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 36 of the 40 applicable recommendations related to responding and reporting, record keeping and information sharing

The Royal Commission made 40 recommendations about institutional responding and reporting, recordkeeping and information sharing.

Recommendations about responding to, and reporting of child sexual abuse are found in *Volume 7* of the *Final Report*, and recommendations 8, 17, 18, 19, and 34 of the *Criminal Justice* report.

Recommendations related to recordkeeping and information sharing are found in *Volume 8* of the *Final Report*.

All 40 of these recommendations apply to the State Government. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 36 of these recommendations.



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40

ROYAL COMMISSION
RECOMMENDATIONS



40

APPLICABLE TO THE
STATE GOVERNMENT



36

ACCEPT OR
ACCEPT IN PRINCIPLE

10.1.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 13 of the 17 recommendations related to responding and reporting

Of the 40 recommendations, 17 recommendations are related to responding and reporting institutional child sexual abuse.

The State Government accepts or accepts in principle 13 of the 17 recommendations related to responding and reporting as set out in the *Final Report*.

The State Government needs to give further consideration to four recommendations related to reporting and responding. Two of these recommendations relate to blind reporting and two relate to expansion of mandatory reporting.

Blind reporting is the reporting of an allegation of sexual abuse without revealing the identity of the victim. These recommendations require further consideration to explore the range of issues and consult with the wide range of stakeholders involved.

The State Government acknowledges that significant evidence has been provided to the Royal Commission on the range of legal and organisational barriers to reporting, particularly by people in religious ministry and who work with children in a closed group environment. Further consideration is required to determine, including models being implemented in other jurisdictions, the most effective mechanisms for addressing underreporting within institutions.

RESPONDING AND REPORTING: LEADING PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Developing child-focused complaint handling

The Royal Commission recommends institutions adopt child-focused complaint handling policies and procedures to improve culture regarding providing appropriate and consistent responses to children. The Commissioner for Children and Young People, Department of Communities and the CREATE Foundation partnered to seek the views of children in care on the barriers to raising complaints. This culminated in October 2016 in a report entitled 'Speaking Out', which provides information to address deficiencies in institutions and ensure the complaint handling policy and procedures are clear and accessible for children.

Department of Education Complaints System

From November 2011 to August 2012, former Supreme Court Judge, the Hon. Peter Blaxell, conducted a special inquiry to examine the conduct and response of relevant public officials and Government agencies in relation to allegations of sexual abuse at St Andrew's Hostel in Katanning, and related organisations that occurred from 1975 to 1990. Following the tabling of the report, "*St Andrew's Hostel Katanning: How the system and society failed our children*", the State Government gave in-principle support for the incorporation of the Country High School Hostels Authority into the Department of Education.

As of July 2017, the *Country High School Hostels Authority Act 1960*, under which the colleges previously operated, was abolished and the *School Education Act 1999* was amended to include Part 6A – Student Residential Colleges. Residential colleges are now incorporated into the Department of Education.

The aim of the change was to provide college managers and staff with access to additional resources and expertise focused on the needs of students and schooling; establishing systems for dealing with child protection; complaints management and staff oversight; and clear accountability and reporting lines.

The Department has established a comprehensive child-focused complaints system that provides residential college students with avenues to make a complaint.

This includes:

- a telephone line that connects them to a team of expert child protection investigators;
- a child-focused website through which they can make complaints; and
- communication material targeted toward children and young people to raise awareness of their ability to make complaints in several different ways.

The child-focused complaints system:

- is entirely separate from student residential college facilities and staff;
- uses the Department's Standards and Integrity Directorate (SID) as a clearing house for misconduct complaints and for the provision of investigative services;
- provides complainants with the expertise and experience of SID staff who are trained in protective behaviours and as specialist child interviewers;
- was formed through focus groups with students in schools and residential colleges;
- has multiple avenues for complaints including a dedicated phone line, an email address and website with an online form; and
- provides information about external avenues of complaint and crisis support including Western Australia Police Force, Kids Helpline and Crisis Care.

There is a focus on responding to a complaint or claim in a more open and supportive manner. The best interests, welfare and safety of children is the paramount consideration in the Department's response to contemporary notifications. The residential student complaint phone line calls are answered by staff who have expertise in child protection. Details of the complaint phone line are provided to students and parents in handbooks, wallet cards, posters and at orientation.

10.1.2 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 23 recommendations related to record keeping and information sharing

Of the 40 recommendations, 23 recommendations relate to recordkeeping and information sharing. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 23 recommendations related to recordkeeping and information sharing.

The Royal Commission directed recommendations about records retention periods and adherence to a set of record keeping principles to “all institutions that engage in child related work”. The State Government commits to examining how legislation can be amended that will mandate non-government organisations to comply with the same record keeping standards that State Government agencies are bound to comply with under the *State Records Act 2000* (WA).

RECORD KEEPING AND INFORMATION SHARING: LEADING PRACTICE EXAMPLE

Resources to support young people to access information about them

In 2017, Department of Communities, CREATE WA and young people within a care experience developed a set of resources to support young people, while they are in care and after they leave care, to access their case file and records.

See: <https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildrenInCare/Pages/Access-to-Information.aspx>

<https://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildrenInCare/Pages/Leavingcare.aspx>

<http://createyourfuture.org.au/>

Information sharing

The State Government recognises that for agencies and services working with children and families, there will be times when it is necessary to share information to protect their safety and wellbeing. This is because sharing information builds a more complete picture about the circumstances of the person or family being provided services.

Western Australia is well placed to work with other jurisdictions to improve national information sharing as the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* has the broadest enabling provisions for information sharing and the lowest threshold for exchanging relevant information in Australia.

The State Government is participating in national discussions to improve information sharing, recordkeeping and data collection. This is an area that states and territories have agreed to progress cooperatively and consistently at a national level.

State Government retention of records

The State Government already complies with the five principles for child-related records and recordkeeping identified by the Royal Commission.

The *State Records Act 2000* (WA) requires State Government records that may be relevant to an actual or alleged incident of child sexual abuse to be retained. The time period for retention is currently being amended to 45 years, in line with recommendations of the Royal Commission.

11 ADVOCACY, SUPPORT, THERAPEUTIC TREATMENT AND ADDRESSING HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS

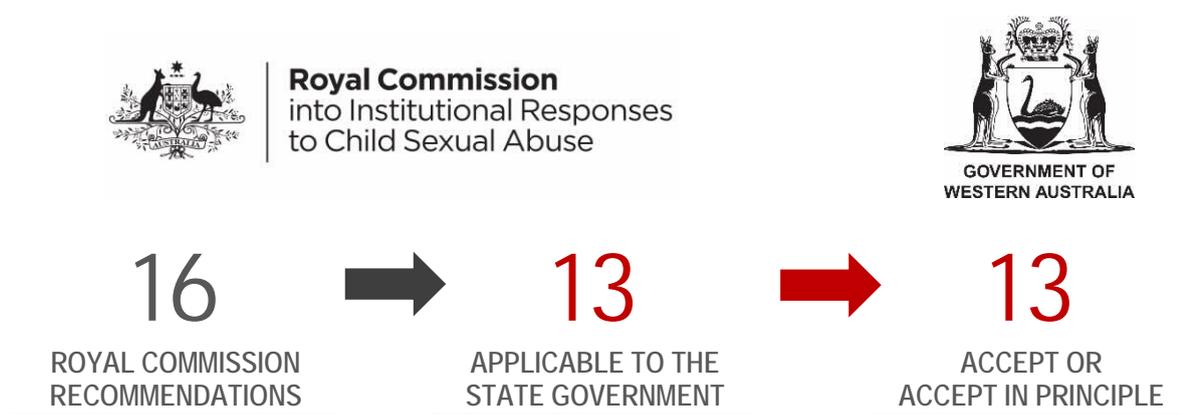
Victims and survivors have diverse needs and require a responsive service system to promote healing and recovery. Services need to be trauma-informed and have an understanding of child sexual abuse. The Royal Commission recommended a system-wide response to address all aspects of victims' and survivors' wellbeing, which may include financial, legal, medical, psychological, spiritual and other forms of assistance. Dedicated community support services for victims and survivors, a national telephone helpline and website, and enhancement of the capacity of specialist sexual assault services were also recommended.

'Harmful sexual behaviours' is an umbrella term to cover all behaviours in children under 18 years that fall across the spectrum of sexual problems. This term includes problematic sexual behaviours, child sexual abuse by children, and juvenile sexual offending. Children with harmful sexual behaviours require a different response to adults who perpetrate child sexual abuse due to their developmental stage and capacity for rehabilitation.

11.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 13 of the applicable recommendations related to advocacy, support, therapeutic treatment services and addressing harmful sexual behaviours

The Royal Commission made 16 recommendations related to advocacy, support, therapeutic treatment services (in *Volume 9* of the Final Report) and addressing harmful sexual behaviours (*Volume 10* of the Final Report).

Thirteen of these 16 recommendations apply to the State Government. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all 13 of these recommendations.



11.1.1 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all six of the applicable recommendations related to advocacy, support and therapeutic treatment services

Of the 13 recommendations that apply to the State Government, six recommendations relate to advocacy, support and therapeutic treatment services. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all six of these recommendations.

ADVOCACY, SUPPORT AND THERAPEUTIC TREATMENT: LEADING PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The Child Protection Unit at Perth Children’s Hospital

The Child Protection Unit (CPU) at Perth Children’s Hospital is a hospital based Child Protection Unit. It provides medical, forensic, social work and therapy services for children up to 16 years and their families, where sexual abuse has occurred or is thought to have occurred. A joint medical and psychosocial risk and safety assessment is carried out by a CPU doctor and social worker, including treatment required. The CPU therapy team provides therapy for children, adolescents and their families where child sexual abuse has occurred. The unit also provides telephone advice, advocacy and crisis support regarding child sexual abuse.

Sexual assault support services

The Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC) provides high-quality care for people, 13 years and over, who have been affected by sexual assault or sexual abuse. SARC is funded and operated by the Western Australian Department of Health. It is staffed by female medical doctors and female and male psychologists, social workers and clinical psychologists, and has been operating for over 40 years. SARC services include:

- urgent medical care and forensic examination and collection of evidence for recent victims of sexual assault in the metropolitan area (past two weeks);
- statewide 24-hour tele-consultation support to country-based medical practitioners providing care for victims of recent sexual assault;
- metropolitan based counselling for victims of recent and historical sexual assault; and
- statewide education and training on managing sexual assault and sexual abuse presentations.

Information about SARC can be found at:

<https://www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/services/sarc/>

Expansion of sexual assault counselling and outreach services

The State Government has committed to the expansion of sexual assault counselling and outreach services in the northern suburbs. This commitment will enable SARC to increase the number of counselling appointments offered and assist with reducing the waiting times experienced by patients. An additional 80 patients per year are anticipated to benefit from this service.

Regional support services

In addition, there are five regional sexual assault support services across the State that are funded by the Department of Health – Bunbury, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, South Hedland and Peel. The services provide a variety of crisis and ongoing counselling for victims of sexual assault as well as therapeutic groups and health promotion activities. They also provide after-hours support across the various regions. These services work in partnership with other agencies such as police and local hospitals.

Child sexual abuse services in Western Australia

There are integrated and collaborative government and non-government services operating across Western Australia, for responding and supporting children and their families affected by child sexual abuse including:

- thirteen Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services and two Indigenous Healing Services that provide healing, support, counselling and therapeutic responses to children and families affected by child sexual abuse.
- the George Jones Child Advocacy Centre, where professionals from different agencies including police, child protection workers, psychologists and child and family advocates form a multi-disciplinary team to provide services to care for all the needs of children who have been abused, and their families.

11.1.2 The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all seven recommendations related to addressing harmful sexual behaviours

Of the 13 recommendations applicable to the State Government, seven recommendations related to addressing harmful sexual behaviours in children. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all seven of these recommendations.

The State Government is actively participating in the Commonwealth Government's Implementation Taskforce, to progress recommendations about addressing the complex issue of children with harmful sexual behaviours as a national priority.

ADDRESSING HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS: LEADING PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Multi-Agency Protocol for children with charges related to harmful sexual behaviour

There is a significant opportunity to mitigate the risk of children demonstrating harmful sexual behaviours from reoffending. This requires a collaborative and holistic approach involving police, education, medical practitioners, health (where appropriate), child protection and the criminal justice system. The Multi-Agency Protocols for Education Options For Young People Charged with Harmful Sexual Behaviours involving the Department of Education, Department of Communities, Department of Health, Youth Justice, Western Australia Police Force and professional services, was implemented in May 2017 to strengthen the Department of Education's ability to manage the risks associated with young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours. For young people under investigation or charged with offences related to harmful sexual behaviours, risk management plans that outline strategies to prevent, avert or minimise these behaviours are developed. Strategies that assist the student to continue to engage in their educational program are developed and enacted. These strategies incorporate and complement therapeutic intervention that other agencies provide. The protocols will enable agencies to identify opportunities to develop and implement preventative strategies for all students.

Services for harmful sexual behaviours

All of the state's child sexual abuse services accept voluntary referrals and provide specific therapeutic intervention to children and their families affected by harmful sexual behaviours and children and young people who are at risk of engaging in harmful sexual behaviours.

Resources to assist institutions to address harmful sexual behaviours

The Commissioner for Children and Young People has been working with the State Government and non-government sectors to develop and coordinate improved prevention and practice responses to children displaying harmful sexual behaviours. This has included the publication of resources, mapping of services and the development of training opportunities for professionals working to support children and young people and deliver policy and practice in relevant organisations such as child protection, education and health services.

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12 OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

A total of nine recommendations of the Royal Commission that apply to the State Government relate to issues that do not fall within the nine themes of this response that have been discussed in the previous pages.

The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all nine of these recommendations.



Three of the nine recommendations relate to the State Government publicly reporting on responses to the Royal Commission recommendations (recommendations 17.1 - 17.3 of the *Final Report*). The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all three recommendations.

The remaining six recommendations are from the *Criminal Justice* report (recommendations 1, 2, 78, 83-85), and relate to overall criminal justice responses, support for making a victim impact statement, and miscellaneous legislative amendments. The State Government accepts or accepts in principle all six of these recommendations.

To view all of these recommendations, please follow the link:
www.dpc.wa.gov.au/childabuseroyalcommission.

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13 NEXT STEPS

The findings of the Royal Commission are extensive and require careful and thorough consideration as to how implementation of recommended reforms will occur. In the second half of 2018, the State Government will develop a staged implementation plan, which will identify reform priorities, timeframes and resourcing options.

This State Government planning will occur under the auspices of the Community Safety and Family Support Cabinet Sub Committee, with input from all relevant stakeholders, including non-government organisations and community groups.

The implementation of Royal Commission recommendations will occur within a tight fiscal environment. In developing the staged implementation plan, the focus will be on ensuring the optimal allocation and use of existing resources. While the tight fiscal environment will constrain the State Government's ability to allocate new funding, consideration may be given to specific funding requirements as part of future budget processes. The State Government is determined to use resources efficiently and effectively and to prioritise work that will achieve the greatest benefits for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, and for children, present and future, within our State.

Additionally, the State Government will work in partnership with other states and territories, and the Commonwealth Government to progress those recommendations identified as being national priorities.

There has already been progress with implementing some Royal Commission recommendations. A report on progress will be tabled in Parliament at the end of 2018. This will fulfil part of recommendation 17.2, that all governments should table a report on the implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations 12 months following the tabling of the Royal Commission Final Report, and deliver four consecutive annual reports thereafter.

The breadth of the Royal Commission's recommendations confirms that keeping children safe is everybody's business. Implementing recommended reforms that are aimed at keeping children safe, improving institutional responding, strengthening criminal justice responses, and providing restitution and reparation to victims of child sexual abuse, will require a coordinated and dedicated effort across all levels of government; local, State and Commonwealth, together with commitment from the non-government sector and community groups.

This response may contain material that is confronting and distressing. If you require support, please [click on this link](#) to a list of available support services.

The Royal Commission's Final Report and other publications can be accessed by [clicking on this link](#).