




Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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**NATIONAL REDRESS SCHEME FOR INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE  
(COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (3.33 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill. I congratulate the minister on introducing this bill into this House for debate. The evidence that was revealed by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was truly sickening. I know that a lot of us were sickened by what we had heard, but I think the public is even more sickened by anyone playing politics with this issue. This institutional abuse occurred across many decades. The public want it fixed and the victims want it fixed. They do not want people making cheap political points on an issue that is very dear to their heart.

This bill is all about us, as representatives of this parliament, as mature adults, putting politics aside and standing beside these victims. Let us pass this bill to give the redress that these victims deserve after the many decades of abuse that was found to have occurred by the royal commission. We must accept that institutional sexual abuse has been occurring for generations. It falls on the shoulders of the members of this parliament to be mature enough to stand up and pass this bill so that we can get the redress scheme working to assist these victims.

We cannot ignore what happened. The commissioners were well aware of many of the measures that have been implemented already to better protect children and respond to the needs of survivors. I think the minister has done an excellent job in putting those measures in place. As the Minister for Education, I have made sure that our educational institutions have also implemented policies to protect our children.

I am very proud that this government has opted in to participate in the national redress scheme, which I believe will contribute to healing. Making cheap political points will not. This bill will help in the healing and provide recognition to those people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse. As we know, many of them were not believed. Instead of acknowledgement, respect and support, many of them were subjected to institutional corruption and cover-up. These institutions were breeding grounds for perpetrators who found their way into them knowing that their victims would not be believed, would not be respected and that for decades action would not be taken. I am so proud to say that I am in a society that recognises this issue. The culture has changed and we now take these allegations and matters seriously and we are implementing changes.

We came into the redress scheme in April 2018 but, as a state government, we made sure that the scheme that we went into was the right one—one that would respond to victims, one that we would be happy to be a part of, one that would ensure that victims received what they required. From a government perspective, and as the Minister for Education, for 16 of the 189 recommendations Education is the lead agency. Those recommendations include measures such as making sure we have child safety standards and how institutions can implement them, which we have done, and which we continue to refine. We examine the record keeping and information sharing and, obviously, responses to child sexual abuse allegations in schools, the manner in which schools take these serious allegations and we have also introduced legislative changes.

As we know, the scheme offers redress in three ways: a monetary payment, counselling and psychological care, and the option to receive a direct personal response from institutions responsible for providing the redress. Today, I am very proud to say that we are opting into this redress scheme. I definitely support this bill. I urge any institution that has been named but has not yet opted in to do so. I commend the bill to the House.