




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (12.21 pm): I rise to speak to the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2018. I begin by thanking the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence for introducing the bill and for her respectful and heartfelt words when the bill was introduced to the House. Queenslanders are truly fortunate to have such a committed, compassionate minister in this important portfolio, which I know is very important to her. I thank her.

I would also like to thank my colleagues on the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee for their respectful consideration of the bill; those who lodged written submissions on the bill; the committee secretariat; and the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women for their assistance. After careful consideration, the committee has recommended that the bill be passed.

This is an important policy that delivers on the government's commitment to ensure that victims of institutional child sexual abuse committed in Queensland are able to access redress through the Commonwealth government's national redress scheme. The bill was introduced in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse's *Redress and civil litigation report*, which was released in 2015. The report recommended the establishment of a single national scheme to provide eligible applicants with three elements of redress: a monetary payment, access to counselling and psychological care, and a direct personal response from responsible institutions. The federal government subsequently announced that it would create a redress scheme and invited states, territories and non-government institutions to opt in.

The federal government's national redress scheme has three core elements broadly consistent with the royal commission's recommendations, and on 19 June 2018 the Commonwealth parliament passed the national redress act, creating the 10-year national scheme. The Commonwealth government led consultation on the national redress scheme, including with our state based stakeholders and victims of institutional child sexual abuse. In working with the Commonwealth, Queensland has reinforced the need for the scheme to be focused on the needs of the people affected by institutional child sexual abuse and to align with the recommendations of the royal commission.

The bill's primary objectives are to enable Queensland's operation of the national redress scheme to introduce a framework to enable appropriate information sharing by Queensland government agencies for the purposes of the national scheme and to amend the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 to provide that redress payments may not be deducted from victim assistance payments under the act. The national redress scheme is intended to provide support to people who were sexually abused as children in an institutional context. It has been designed in accordance with the royal commission's principle that the relevant institutions should pay for the abuse experienced by children for which they were responsible.

There was a great amount of support for this bill throughout the committee process. For the benefit of the House, I would like to read an excerpt from the Australian Lawyers Alliance submission. They stated that they 'believe that the establishment of a national redress scheme ... has the potential to have a genuine positive impact on the lives of thousands of people whose lives have been affected by sexual abuse when they were children' and that it will 'provide meaningful redress for survivors'. I particularly acknowledge respectfully those who have experienced or have been victims of child sexual abuse. I acknowledge their pain and thank them for their contribution to this important task and for their ongoing courage.

The bill also makes necessary amendments to support Queensland government entities to participate in the national scheme, including the introduction of an information-sharing network. The national scheme operator will request information from Queensland government entities through a central point of contact to be established within the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. The provisions ensure Queensland government entities only share information with the central contact point and the national scheme operator and not with each other. This is designed to provide a safeguard by limiting the information that can be shared to that which is required to support the operation of the scheme.

In conclusion, this bill makes necessary changes for Queensland survivors to have access to the national redress scheme in respect of child sexual abuse committed in Queensland government and non-government institutional settings through the Commonwealth government's national redress scheme. It also allows a redress process that recognises the experiences of people who were sexually abused as children in Queensland institutions and is an important step towards recovery for those victims. It is time and it is appropriate. I commend the bill to the House.