




Speech By  
**Nikki Boyd**

**MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS**

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

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (2.53 pm): Today is a proud moment as we sign on to commence the Queensland operation of the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. This is a day that many Queenslanders have been waiting for. This bill will introduce the framework to enable appropriate information sharing by Queensland government agencies for the purposes of the national scheme and will amend the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 to provide that redress payments cannot be deducted from a victim assistance payment under the act. I think the committee reported it very well when it said—

While the National Redress Scheme may not meet every expectation, it stands to benefit many thousands of Queensland survivors of institutional child sexual abuse, and offer closure and support they may not otherwise receive.

I would like to pay tribute to one of my constituents who has been a tireless advocate in this space, Joan Isaacs. Joan attended Sacred Heart School in Sandgate where between the ages of 14 and 15 she was groomed, manipulated, harassed and assaulted by the chaplain of the school, Catholic priest Father Derriman. Joan has gone on to tell her story as a survivor of child sexual abuse through to the legal processes against her attacker through her book *To Prey and to Silence*, named as a finalist in the *Courier-Mail's* People's Choice Awards last year. Of course Joan was the first witness to appear before the royal commission to share her experience of the Catholic Church's Towards Healing program. Once heard, Joan's story does not and cannot leave you unmoved. Her activism and her voice forge as a way forward for all victims. She is truly remarkable with a deep internal strength. I say thank you, Joan, for your work and thank you to the many activists who have spoken up in this space.

I want to read into the public record the epilogue of Joan's book. It states—

Through the Royal Commission and this book I now have a voice. I have taken back the power that was taken from me as a child. I have taken back the power that was taken from me by the Catholic Church through its Towards Healing program.

Being silenced through threat, shame or guilt serves only the abusers and those who protect them. It takes away the power of the victim and keeps them bound. It allows abuse to continue. Through this Royal Commission, I and other victims have taken back our power. Speaking out is the first step to taking back control of our own lives and destinies.

Through the work of the Royal Commission, the truth about the sexual abuse of children has been exposed. This country will never be the same. In the future, children in institutions who are targeted by abusers will be believed and supported. The Catholic Church will never have the moral authority that it once had and will never again be able to silence victims of clergy abuse.

Speaking out is crucial to healing, but it does not have to be before a Royal Commission. It can be to a partner, a trusted friend or a therapist. Only silence allows the abuser to win and keeps the abused a victim.

I now feel free to begin my healing, forty-seven years after my abuse, seventeen years since my perpetrator was jailed for his crimes and fourteen years after I was silenced by the Church. I am no longer a victim—I am a survivor.

*I am the master of my fate,*

*I am the captain of my soul.*