

# **ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

The Western Australian Government (WA Government) yesterday released its six-month response to the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse.

The WA Government's response fulfils the 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.

## Royal Commission Background

The Royal Commission was established in 2013 to investigate systemic failures of public and private institutions to protect children from sexual abuse.

Broadly, the Royal Commission's aims were to:

- Identify what institutions should do to better protect children.
- Investigate how to improve reporting of and responding to reports of institutional child sexual abuse.
- Eliminate impediments to responding to the abuse.
- Address the impact of past and future abuse.

The WA Government strongly supported the work of the Royal Commission.

Throughout the five years of the Royal Commission's inquiry, the WA Government presented detailed evidence and submissions and participated in public hearings, case studies and roundtables.

The Royal Commission released the Final Report on 15 December 2017 and contained a total of 409 recommendations, with 310 recommendations applicable to the WA Government and 99 recommendations that are not applicable because they are directed to governments and non-government institutions outside the jurisdiction of the WA Government.

The Royal Commission's work has been challenging and confronting, but it will create significant and long-lasting change.

## Public Release of the WA Government's Position on the Royal Commission recommendations

Yesterday, the public release of the WA Government's position in relation to the 310 relevant Royal Commission recommendations, details that 0 recommendations have been Not Accepted, 289 recommendations have been Accepted or Accepted in Principle and 21 recommendations are subject to Further Consideration.

Broadly, the Western Australian Government's six-month response:

- Provides a commitment to addressing historical abuse that has occurred, preventing further abuse from happening, and ensuring a swift response to abuse should it occur again.
- Identifies the WA Government's response to each of the Royal Commission's recommendations.
- Acknowledges the need for national coordination, consistency and flexibility.
- Demonstrates work already undertaken, through examples of leading practice.
- Sets out the approach to progressing implementation of the recommendations.
- Commits to provide public annual reports.

Key principles of the WA Government response are to protect the leading-practice frameworks and initiatives already implemented in this State, to require flexibility of national approaches and to focus on building a community where children are safe and to improve responses whenever exceptions occur.

Importantly, the WA Government has also agreed to join National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.

The WA Government's detailed response to the Royal Commission recommendations and FAQ's can be accessed at: <https://www.dpc.wa.gov.au/childabuseroyalcommission>

The Royal Commission recommendations have a community-wide effect that relate to all levels of government and formal institutions, through to not-for-profits and community organisations / clubs operating solely with volunteers throughout Australia.

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

The community has a right to expect our children are safe, especially within the institutions entrusted to protect, educate, care and nurture them.

Given the extensive interconnection across all levels of government and the impact more broadly across the community; implementation of the Royal Commission's recommendations will require careful consideration, engagement and cooperation when considering implementation, particularly taking into account the differences in organisational skill-level, capacity, resources and local circumstance.

An Implementation Framework articulating reform priorities, lead agencies, implementation timeframes and indicative costings will be developed and delivered for the WA Government's consideration in November 2018.

The WA Government is already participating in several discussions with the Commonwealth and other states, in relation to national strategies and frameworks regarding child safeguarding that will impact on the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC), our organisational stakeholders and ultimately, the broader community.

Key stakeholder consultation will occur over the next few months during implementation planning following a developed engagement strategy and where possible, existing DLGSC industry partner conferences, forums, workshops and meetings will be targeted for that engagement.

The DLGSC will ensure that:

- Royal Commission recommendations that the Department is responsible for will be comprehensively consulted.
- Our stakeholders will be well informed of key national and state level developments.
- Effective two-way communication will occur.
- Timely and well-considered input will be encouraged and facilitated.

More information regarding the DLGSC engagement strategy during implementation planning will follow shortly.

Please reassure your organisations, your members, your staff and the broader community you work in, that effective consultation will occur in developing the WA Government's implementation framework. Prior to any reforms being implemented existing child safeguarding protections (Working with Children Checks etc) and proactive initiatives (Safe Club 4 Kids) offered by the DLGSC remain in place and are to be followed.

Please contact Gordon MacMile, Director Strategic Coordination and Delivery on (08) 9492 9752 or [gordon.macmille@dlgsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:gordon.macmille@dlgsc.wa.gov.au) with any queries regarding the Department's position on the Royal Commission recommendations.