

Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse



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The Need for the Inquiry

When a child is sexually abused while in the care of an institution, the impact can be devastating and last for a lifetime. It can leave a traumatic legacy for a victim's family and for future generations.

Child sexual abuse affects the entire community and diminishes the trust we place in our institutions. That trust is further eroded when an institution fails to appropriately respond to the victim's needs.

Although there have previously been some inquiries with limited terms of reference, in recent years it became clear to the Australian community that there needed to be a broad-ranging national response. On 11 January 2013, Her Excellency Quentin Bryce, (then) Governor-General, appointed the Royal Commission to inquire into institutional responses to child sexual abuse.

Interim Report

- Interim report contains 345 pages of material.
- Plus 2 Research Papers.
 - History of child sexual abuse offences in Australia
 - Brief overview of contemporary sexual offence and child sexual abuse legislation in Australia
- Extension for 2 years requested & granted
- \$126 million in additional funding.

Key Findings

- Ninety per cent of perpetrators were male.
- On average, female victims were nine years old and male victims 10 years old when the abuse started.
- On average it took victims 22 years to disclose the abuse, men longer than women.

Several themes have emerged from the personal stories people have shared.

For example:

- Sexual abuse often occurs with physical and psychological abuse
- abuse can have lifelong impacts on health
- some children are particularly vulnerable
- repeated abuse and multiple perpetrators are common
- there are major barriers to disclosure and reporting
- institutions and adults have systematically failed to protect children.

Institutional Response to Reports

Many institutions take their responsibility to appropriately respond to reports of child sexual abuse seriously.

Yet many others have failed to respond to reports, or if they have responded, have done so ineffectively.

What is happening as a result

- Mandatory Reporting
 - Failure to protect
 - Failure to disclose
 - Protection of Those Who Report
- Changes to Statute of Limitations
- Simplification to the Onus of Proof
 - Course of conduct

Risk Management of Molestation/Sexual Abuse

When engaging, or appointing new employees, representatives, volunteers, members or service providers, please ensure you have:

- Enquired with two referees as to the persons suitability for the role or position.
- Enquired with their previous posting or employment as to their suitability for the role or position.
- Enquired of them whether they have ever been convicted or investigated for sexual abuse, assault or a sexual offence of any kind.
- Asked them to sign an authority allowing you to conduct a search to determine whether they have a criminal record and have this search conducted; and/or Sight their Working with Children Card.
- Do not placed unknown volunteers in a position of trust within their first six months of joining your organization.
- Keep a two-person rule in place at all times.
- At no time should any form of physical, emotional or mental discipline be administered.

Written procedures & protocols that include.

- A Statement of Objectives in relation to the Protection of Children and Vulnerable People.
- Definitions of abuse including physical, sexual, emotional and neglect.
- How to raise and report concerns of Child and Vulnerable Person abuse.
- Management responsibilities and guidance in relation to Children and Vulnerable Persons.
- Details on how the organisation will support staff and victims.
- Selection and Screening requirements of all staff, leaders and volunteers.
- Avoid internal investigations.

Questions ???

The information provided in this presentation is General in nature and should not be considered Personal Advice. You should seek advice before making insurance decisions



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