



Applying to the National Redress Scheme

Information for people with disability

Please look after yourself – this fact sheet covers child sexual abuse. This can be a difficult topic and reading this information might bring back traumatic memories and experiences. For support or to discuss how you are feeling you can call the Blue Knot helpline to speak with a counsellor on 1300 657 380 (9am-5pm AEST). More contacts for immediate 24/7 help are listed at the end of this fact sheet.

Who can support me?

It is common to feel nervous, confused or overwhelmed about applying to the National Redress Scheme. Be assured, **you are not alone** and there is help available.

Redress Support Services are available in each state and territory and can provide free information and advice about the National Redress Scheme and help you with your application.

People with Disability Australia (PWDA) gives **free and confidential support for people with disability** to access the National Redress Scheme. For more information, call us on 1800 843 929. You can also visit www.nationalredress.gov.au or call the National Redress Scheme on 1800 737 377 to find a support service in your area.

You may like to ask someone you know and trust, like a family member, caregiver or friend, to help you with the application process. You can also ask a trusted person to act on your behalf – this is called a nominee. To appoint a nominee, a Redress Nominee Form must be completed. Redress Support Services can assist you with this process.

Peak disability bodies, People with Disability Australia (PWDA) and Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) have made a helpful fact sheet for people who are supporting someone else with the National Redress Scheme process – see ‘National Redress Scheme: Information for Families, Caregivers and Support People’.

Important information before you start

You can only make one application to National Redress Scheme so it is important to include all institutions and experiences of child sexual abuse in your application.

Applications can be made any time before the 30 June 2027.

How do I apply?

To apply to the National Redress Scheme, you must complete an application form. There are two options for completing an application:

1. you can download and print a form from www.nationalredress.gov.au or call 1800 737 377 to ask for a form to be sent to you.
2. you can apply online through your myGov account. If you don't have a myGov account you can create one at www.my.gov.au – you will need an email address to do this.

You can include copies of supporting documents with your application, for example a police statement, school records or a psychologist's report. However, it is ok if you do not have any documentation or do not want to include it – many people do not have access to their records.

If you have a serious criminal conviction (a sentence of imprisonment for five years or more), you will need to apply through a special assessment process.

You can call legal service knowmore on 1800 605 762 for free, independent advice if you have any questions about the National Redress Scheme and to discuss your other legal options.

Self-care when applying

The application form will ask you about the sexual abuse you experienced and the impact that the sexual abuse has had on you. It may be difficult and painful to recall these experiences. It is important that you complete the application form at your own pace and remember that Redress Support Services are available. You can also speak with a Blue Knot counsellor on their free helpline by calling 1300 657 380.

What happens next?

Waiting for your application to be assessed

Be prepared that this may be a long process – both the application and then waiting for the outcome. It can take up to 12 months (or longer in some circumstances) for an application to be processed and offer made. During this time, you may experience a range of feelings and it is very important to look after yourself. We encourage you to get support from family, friends and caregivers. You can also access Redress Support Services or the Blue Knot helpline on 1300 657 380. If you live in NSW you can apply for counselling through Victims Services before you submit your redress application.

You can withdraw or add further information to your application any time before an offer is made.

Requesting records from the institution/s

The Scheme will contact the institution/s named in your application to request documentation. To do this, they will share some information from your application with the institution including your name, date of birth and your account of the abuse. The Scheme will only share information with the institution about the impact of the abuse if you agree to share this.

It is important that you complete the application form at your own pace and remember that Redress Support Services are available

Reporting abuse to the police

Sometimes the Scheme may report the abuse to the police and child protection authorities. This is when there is a risk of ongoing sexual abuse, for example if the alleged abuser is still working with children, or the applicant is aged under 18 years. Participating institutions are able to use information they receive for internal investigations and disclose information to their insurer.

Who makes the decision?

An independent decision maker assesses your application. The independent decision makers come from a range of backgrounds and professions. They are independent of the Scheme operator (government department) and participating institutions. They consider all the information given by you and the institution. If they determine that the abuse is likely to have happened then an offer of redress is made.

Previous payments related to the abuse (for example through other redress schemes, victims of crime compensation, or out-of-court settlements) may be deducted from your redress payment.

Receiving an offer

The National Redress Scheme will call you and send you a letter about the outcome of your application and the offer being made to you. Within **six months**, you need to either:

1. accept the offer by signing and returning the acceptance document
2. request a review (if you do not agree with the outcome)
3. decline the offer by writing to the Scheme (if you do not accept the offer within six months it is assumed that you have declined).

Institutions cannot request a review of redress decisions.

The acceptance document is a **legally binding agreement** which means that if you accept the offer you cannot bring a civil claim (take legal action) against the institution or their representatives (in relation to the abuse). However, this does not include releasing the person who abused you from liability. A civil claim may be a more appropriate legal option for you. When considering an offer you should call legal service knowmore for free advice on 1800 605 762 or visit their website at www.knowmore.org.au.

You may also like to get financial counselling about how the redress payment will affect your finances. Centrelink for example assess redress payments as assets rather than income (although interest is assessed). Redress payments do not affect the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Legal service knowmore offers a free financial counselling service – call 1800 605 762 or visit their website at www.knowmore.org.au.

Key contacts and resources

Helplines

There are helplines available 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

Lifeline – 13 11 14

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636

Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800

1800RESPECT – 1800 737 732

Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467

MensLine Australia – 1300 789 978

In an emergency call Triple Zero (000)

Blue Knot Foundation – call 1300 657 380 (9am to 5pm AEST), email helpline@blueknot.org.au for trained trauma-informed counsellors or visit www.blueknot.org.au.

1800RESPECT – call 1800 737 732, web chat www.1800respect.org.au (24 hours a day) for counselling, information and support for sexual assault, domestic and family violence.

Further information

National Redress Scheme – call 1800 737 377 (8am to 5pm AEST, Monday to Friday) or visit www.nationalredress.gov.au to find free support services, a list of institutions who have joined, or for an application form.

knowmore – call 1800 605 762 or visit www.knowmore.org.au for a free, confidential and independent legal service for anyone who is considering applying to the National Redress Scheme.

People with Disability Australia (PWDA) – call 1800 843 929 or visit www.pwd.org.au for free, confidential and independent support for people with disability to access the National Redress Scheme.

Child Wise – visit www.childwise.org.au for fact sheets and videos about the National Redress Scheme for young people, families and caregivers including resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) – has produced a series of fact sheets about violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children and young people with disability at www.cyda.org.au.