

Lotus Times

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Lotus Times is published in collaboration with **The Historical Abuse Network** which works collaboratively with people who experienced abuse and neglect in institutions, foster care and detention centres. We acknowledge their courage as they move from adversity to hope in seeking public recognition, justice and redress.

Special Edition

A selection of quotes from the Queensland State Parliament to recognise the passing of the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Commonwealth Powers) Bill on 19 September 2018.



Queensland Parliament Validates Survivors.



We have put together this special edition *Lotus Times* to provide you with a snapshot of the Queensland Parliament's passing of National Redress Act which will enable Queensland Government and non-government institutions to participate in the Commonwealth National Redress Scheme.

Whilst the Redress Scheme is not universally endorsed by many of you, the purpose of compiling this edition is to bring to you the influence that you have had on members of parliament who have voted for this milestone. We have taken excerpts from the Parliamentary speeches that reference the influence you have had.

Without your voices, your determination to make sure your Members of Parliament, your leaders, Premiers and Prime Ministers, Archbishops, Bishops and Faith Leaders, Principals of schools, CEOs of organisations, this debate in Parliament may never have occurred. Your influence has been from all parts of Queensland, Australia and abroad.

I hope you can pause in your day to value your contribution, whether your Member of Parliament spoke or not, they voted. The power of your voices has been recognised.

Whilst there is still much work to be done for Australians, including governments, to fully understand the ongoing legacy of the past on

your lives and the cost that speaking up has had – it is important to value all that you have achieved over the decades of speaking up.

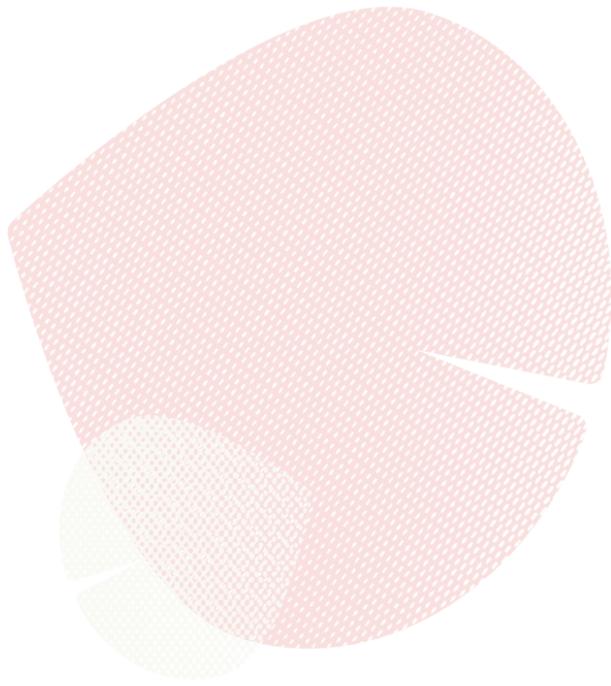
Know that from being disbelieved, referred to as unstable, lying, discrediting churches, governments or schools... you are now vindicated. The responsibility or blame is no longer on your shoulders. It is on the institutions that enabled, ignored, stayed silent or did nothing as the abuse of children was allowed to unfold. The very institutions that were trusted to care, educate, nurture and protect. It is now all on public record.

As the saying goes from Margaret Mead: *Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has.*

Regards,

Karyn Walsh

Karyn, Micah Projects



In order for the National Redress Scheme to be implemented all States and Territories have been required to pass legislation to enable the participation of governments and non-governments institutions.

This process started when Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Deputy Premier and Treasurer Jackie Trad, and Minister Di Farmer together announced that Queensland would opt into the National Redress Scheme.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said it was an important milestone acknowledging the suffering of those abused in care. “Although no amount of money can return a lost childhood it is important we acknowledge what victims have been through.” The Premier called on institutions run by non-government organisations to follow suit.

Deputy Premier and Treasurer Jackie Trad said “Queensland is working with the Commonwealth and other states to finalise the design of the Scheme and this money (\$500 million) will support healing and recovery which is, frankly, the least we can do.”

12 June 2018

Minister Di Farmer introduced the Bill.

The Bill was referred to Health, Communities, Disability Services, and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee to consider the Bill.

19 September 2018

The Bill was presented to Parliament for a Second Reading. The Vote resulted in the National Redress Bill being passed.

Extracts from the initial presentation by Hon. Di Farmer to Queensland Parliament on 12 June 2018

■ **Hon. DI FARMER (Bulimba –ALP)**

Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

“I present a bill for an act to adopt the National Redress Act, and to refer certain matters relating to the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse to the Parliament of the Commonwealth, for the purposes of section 51 (xxxvii) of the Commonwealth Constitution, and to amend the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009.

As the Minister for Child Safety, I am proud to take the lead in enabling the Queensland government to participate in the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. I am very pleased that our government is taking this important step towards recognising the experiences of people who were sexually abused as children in Queensland institutions. I particularly want to acknowledge the incredible work that has been done by the Premier and by the Attorney-General and the work done collaboratively across the government in bringing about Queensland’s participation in the national redress scheme.

As much as the introduction of a national redress scheme is a seminal moment in the national fight for recognition of the wrongs of the past, it would be remiss of us not to consider the path that has brought us to this point and to hear the voices of those who have fought through incredible pain, overcoming incredible obstacles, to bring about appropriate recognition and support that for so long eluded many of them.

Child sexual abuse, by its very nature, has been a crime that has thrived on secrecy, on the story never being told. I have met incredible, wonderful, brave people who found within them the courage to tell the stories of when they were hurt, when they were betrayed by the very people and institutions that were supposed to be keeping them safe and nurturing them and helping them to grow up to be strong, healthy and happy adults. Is that not what we all want for our children? Do we not all long to make them strong, for them to be fulfilled, and to have them ready and able to boldly take their places in the world?

Our own understanding of what we want for our children allows us a glimpse of the depth of betrayal that people who have experienced child sexual abuse have suffered. Many of these people were robbed of the childhood that was rightly theirs. They were betrayed. They were let down, and for many of them it was years and even decades before anybody would listen to their stories.

Some were called liars, some were called troublemakers, some were threatened, some were told they were worthless and, tragically for many, they believed at the time that this was true. The road to where we are now, to being on the verge of implementing the national redress scheme, has been long and, for many, far too long. For some who carried on the fight for many, many years it has, indeed, come too late.

We do not pretend, and nor should we, that enough has already been done, but in Queensland we can justifiably be proud of the work we have done over the last two decades to start down the road of recognition and reparation for the survivors of abuse. Before the turn of the century we had already taken steps towards righting the wrongs of the past and taking responsibility for the terrible damage that had been done in government and other institutions.”

“On 12 November 2012, when announcing her intention to recommend to the Governor-General that a Royal Commission be established to inquire into institutional responses to child sexual abuse, the then **Prime Minister, Julia Gillard**, said—

‘The allegations that have come to light recently about child sexual abuse have been heartbreaking. These are insidious, evil acts to which no child should be subject.’

She also commented—

‘There have been too many revelations of adults who have averted their eyes from this evil.’



Referring to the victims, the former Prime Minister went on to say—

‘They deserve to have their voices heard and their claims investigated. I believe a Royal Commission is the best way to do this.’

The Royal Commission was to examine all religious organisations, state care providers, not-for-profit bodies and other child service agencies, including how those organisations responded to abuse allegations.

Then Prime Minister Gillard explained that Australia was in a circumstance where two states had different inquiries on foot and, because of the allegations of moving people around, it was something that went beyond the borders of any one state. She came to the view that in those circumstances a national approach was best. She said that Australia must ‘do everything we can to make sure that what has happened in the past is never allowed to happen again’.

She later said that Australia must ‘start to create a future where people who perpetrate child sexual abuse cannot hide in institutions, where we work together to find a better way of keeping our children safe’.

In discussing the decision to focus on institutional responses, the then Prime Minister explained—

‘There has been a systemic failure to respond to child sexual abuse in institutional contexts and to better protect children and I particularly want to get the insights about what would stop that kind of systemic failure happening again.’

The work of the Royal Commission shone a light on the abhorrent treatment of our children in institutions. The final report was handed to the Governor-General on 15 December 2017, representing the culmination of a five-year inquiry into institutional responses to child sexual abuse and related matters.

The report is told in 17 volumes, which is a reflection of the rigorous process undertaken by the inquiry, which included 57 public hearings and 8,000 private sessions. Over 400 days of testimony, the Royal Commission heard from 1,200 witnesses. Approximately 4,000 institutions were reported to the Royal Commission. The report contains a total of 409 recommendations, which are focused on making institutions safer for children.”

“**Justice Peter McClellan** praised the bravery of those who came forward to share their stories and inform the Royal Commission. He said—

‘For victims and survivors, telling their stories has required great courage and determination. Most are stories of personal trauma and many are of personal tragedy.’

‘... for many survivors talking about past events required them to revisit traumatic experiences that profoundly harmed them.’

Justice McClellan went on to quote former Prime Minister Gillard, who said—

‘Child sexual abuse is a hideous, shocking and vile crime. And it is clear from what is already in the public domain that too many children were the subject of child sexual abuse in institutions.’

Police, child protection agencies and the criminal justice system all failed to listen to and protect young people, as well as the churches, orphanages and other groups that had come under the commission’s gaze. Justice McClellan said—

‘Investigation processes were inadequate, and criminal procedures were inappropriate...’

‘Some leaders felt their primary responsibility was to protect the institution’s reputation, and the accused person. Many did not recognise the impact this had on children.’

‘Although the primary responsibility for the sexual abuse of a child lies with the abuser and the institution of which they were part, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the problems faced by many people who have been abused are the responsibility of our entire society.’

To underline just why joining the new national redress scheme and getting this right is so important, and also to honour the courage of all of the survivors who came forward to the Royal Commission, I now want to share some of their stories ...”

[To see these stories and full text of Hon. Di Farmer’s presentation, visit: www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/tableOffice/BillMaterial/180612/National.pdf]

“When we hear these stories we get a sense of the anguish, the frustration, the pain and the damage that has been carried for years by these survivors. It is not just the initial abuse that has caused the trauma. It is the years and in some cases decades of not being believed, of being dismissed, of being told there is nothing they can do or of being told to just get over it and move on with their lives.

Like many people who have experienced significant trauma would know, there is an ongoing price that these people have been paying and it is more than past time to put an end to the ongoing harm this can cause.”



These quotes are extracts from speeches by members of the Queensland Parliament, 19 September 2018. They show a bi-partisan acknowledgement of the need for this historic Bill in Queensland—the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Commonwealth Powers) Bill.

■ **Mr BENNETT (Burnett–LNP)**

“This is a very important bill and I inform the minister that there will be bipartisan support for it. It was important to have the five-year royal commission into something as insidious as institutional child sexual abuse, and it has led us to this place to debate this bill today.

Not only do survivors deserve this redress but Queensland’s current and future children deserve protection against abuse; we all would agree.”

“This bill will allow Queenslanders to fully participate in a national redress scheme. This bill is a vital part of Queensland and Australia attempting to make amends for survivors who have suffered in silence for too long. My colleagues on this side of the chamber will support the bill here today. This is not a controversial bill; this is a necessary bill. The proposed legislation will bring Queensland into line with the rest of the nation. It is a bill that serves to provide redress to thousands of Queensland survivors of institutional child abuse. This bill makes sense, it is long overdue and, as such, the bill will be supported by this side of the chamber.”

■ **Mr HARPER (Thuringowa–ALP)**

“I rise to speak in support of the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2018. Before I turn to the bill, I acknowledge the previous speaker the member for Burnett in his role of shadow minister. I appreciate his opening remarks, which were in the bipartisan fashion that we need to deliver this very important piece of legislation for Queensland.

The bill is important to literally thousands of Queenslanders who have suffered sexual abuse in government and non-government institutions. It provides those affected by the trauma with an avenue of redress. If this redress act were not established, many would continue to suffer in silence, perhaps unable to proceed through a costly private civil case, which does place, as we heard, a huge and unfair financial burden on families and individuals.”

■ **Mr McARDLE (Caloundra–LNP)**

“The bill before the House continues to address one of the great dark sins of our time: the issue of child sexual abuse. Over the decades it has remained hidden and in many cases ignored—and deliberately ignored—by institutions right across this nation. It is important that we continue to acknowledge the pain and suffering these little children endured and, of course, the pain they suffer now. How many took their own lives? How many are now addicted to legal and illegal drugs? How many are suffering at this second in time because of what took place all those years ago? There is no doubt that this bill is a proper step.”

■ **Ms PEASE (Lytton–ALP)**

“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.”

■ **Mr HUNT (Nicklin–LNP)**

“The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse uncovered shocking, disturbing and often unfathomable abuse across institutions, religious groups and government controlled entities. Some of the organisations that held our greatest trust and were supposed to care for our most vulnerable—our children—betrayed that trust, at times in the most heinous of ways. Many years later, people still suffer the mental and physical scars of that abuse.

Organisations have been left with their reputations in tatters, having failed our children so badly. Our Australian community will take a

very long time to heal from the shameful revelations of that inquiry. The reality of what has been uncovered after being covered up for so long has meant that survivors could be heard, believed and begin the process of healing.”

“In relation to this redress scheme, it would be difficult to land on a perfect system. For some survivors, the trauma, betrayal of trust and ongoing mental scars will never be healed by the scheme. However, it goes some way to beginning the process of healing for the victims and for our community, which also feels betrayed.”

■ **Mr BERKMAN (Maiwar–Grn)**

“I rise to speak in support of the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2018 and the amendments circulated yesterday. The passage of this bill obviously represents a watershed moment for survivors of child sexual abuse, giving effect in Queensland to the national redress scheme by adopting the federal scheme.”

“I would like to thank the committee secretariat as always for their tireless efforts in conducting this inquiry and my fellow committee members. I thank also the officers of the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women for their assistance and information provided in briefings to the committee.

I want to extend particular thanks to the groups that gave evidence at the public hearing. These include: knowmore, Community Legal Centres Queensland, Queensland Advocacy Inc., Micah Projects and the Australian Lawyers Alliance. Taking into account the need for immediate reform to address those issues I identified a moment ago, I commend this bill to the House.”

■ **Mr RUSSO (Toohey–ALP)**

“As the minister stated in her introductory speech on the bill on 12 June 2018, in 1999 it was the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions, also known as the Forde inquiry, that opened the door and the eyes of many Queenslanders to the horrors that had previously been a terrible secret borne by



“The fact that our educational, religious, sporting, youth and state institutions had covered up, had aided and abetted the abusers, was a devastating betrayal of the victims and of our Australian ideals.”

–Mr Lachlan Millar

“... we would not be debating this bill ... had it not been for the brave voices of those who fought through incredible pain and have overcome enormous obstacles to bring about appropriate recognition and support.”

–Ms Meaghan Scanlon

too many people. In the foreword to the inquiry’s report, Commissioner Forde stated—

‘I urge all Queenslanders to contemplate the experiences of children in institutions, how it came to pass that many of them were abused and mistreated, and why it has taken so long for their stories to be told. It was society that failed those children.’

The report stated—

‘Reparation will require the government and responsible religious organisations to enter into a restorative process with survivors to redress the harm done. Accountability for the harm done cannot be characterised as a legal issue only; the government and religious organisations must also accept moral and political accountability.’

The report went on to state—

‘The principle of compensation is accepted in our society as a means of restitution for damages resulting from the types of abuse many children suffered ...’

I commend the bill to the House.”

■ **Mr LISTER (Southern Downs–LNP)**

“If you put yourself in the shoes of a young person in an institution, with nowhere to go, no voice and no-one to stand up for them, having to suffer these terrible traumas and injustices, you can see how vitally important it is that society do all it can to rectify the problem and acknowledge the difficulties that people have been through. As someone famous once said, an evil once recognised is halfway towards its remedy.

I am in awe of the victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, many of whom have had to overcome enormous personal hurdles in order to participate in the royal commission and provide submissions and information to legislatures like ours. This bill is not perfect. I am aware of that. I do not think any form of redress could be perfect in the eyes of people who have suffered so grievously.”

“I would like to conclude by saying that I deeply regret the trauma and the enduring effect that institutional child sex abuse has had on

Queenslanders and Australians. Our regret probably does not count for that much when we consider what they have been through, but I would like to thank all those involved with the royal commission and the development of this bill for their forthrightness and for the bravery they have shown in exposing their own stories. I commend the bill to the House.”

■ **Ms SCANLON (Gaven–ALP)**

“Child sexual abuse is, by its very nature, a crime that thrives on secrecy. I want to acknowledge that we would not be debating this bill today had it not been for the brave voices of those who fought through incredible pain and have overcome enormous obstacles to bring about appropriate recognition and support for victims. Many of these people were robbed of their childhood. They were betrayed and let down by people and institutions that were supposed to be keeping them safe and nurturing them to grow up to be successful adults.

For many survivors it was years and even decades before anyone would listen to their stories. Some were called liars, some were threatened and some were even told that they were worthless. Tragically, for many they believed at the time that this was true. We have all heard about the horrific stories where many of our most vulnerable children were victims. The children and families who needed help the most were taken advantage of by people in trusted positions of power. We do not pretend, and nor should we, that enough has already been done. However, here in Queensland we should acknowledge the work we have done over the last two decades to start addressing the recognition and reparation for the survivors of abuse.”

■ **Dr ROWAN (Moggill–LNP)**

“As the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has made painfully clear, for far too long a significant number of children were let down by many of our key institutions, including government institutions, and child victims were robbed of the chance to grow up in a safe and prosperous community.

I have to say that personally I have been shocked and dismayed as to what has occurred in many government and non-government institutions over many years. The failed governance processes and failed timely responsiveness to either child sexual abuse allegations and/or proven offences has been deeply disturbing. In the 1970s as a child I remember being driven by my parents past a particular boys home in the western suburbs. Having read as part of the Royal Commission inquiry some of the incidents and abuse that took place there, I feel deep sorrow and hurt for those victims.

As members in this House also know, I am a specialist physician who has treated those with many drug and alcohol problems. There is no doubt that children who have suffered with childhood abuse and neglect are likely, unfortunately, to develop substance dependency problems, and I have certainly seen that in my professional experience.”

“The sexual abuse of a child is an unthinkable, horrific crime. It is a crime perpetrated on the most vulnerable in our society at a time when they must rely on the trust and support of those around them to help guide and nurture them through life. It is, quite simply, a fundamental breach of trust. In November 2012 former Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced her intention to establish a Royal Commission into institutional responses to child abuse. As many in this House will recall, at that time a growing number of allegations concerning child sexual abuse in institutions continued to be raised, leading to the formation of the Royal Commission. As the then Prime Minister said regarding those allegations and revelations—

‘The individuals concerned deserve the most thorough of investigations into the wrongs that have been committed against them. They deserve to have their voices heard and their claims investigated.’

No-one in good conscience could dispute that. I commend former Prime Minister Gillard for instigating this royal commission.”

“The significance of joining this national redress scheme and the importance it holds for survivors



of this abuse cannot be overstated. No amount of redress can ever compensate for the hurt and suffering inflicted on those innocent Queenslanders, but it is a beginning. The importance of this scheme is about giving a voice to those who had theirs taken away. It is about Queenslanders who were once children and teenagers who have for far too long had to suffer and survive in silence to be silenced no more.”

■ **Ms HOWARD (Ipswich—ALP)**

“This bill recognises that, while the abuse may have stopped long ago, survivors still face a daily battle with ongoing trauma which has effectively diminished and haunted their adult lives. While the past cannot be changed and no monetary amount can replace the personal experience of trauma related to child sexual abuse, Queensland’s participation in the national redress scheme demonstrates our government’s commitment to survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. We are committed to giving these people a voice and to listening to their claims with seriousness and compassion so that they may take steps towards healing and justice.”

■ **Mr MANDER (Everton—LNP)**

Deputy Leader of the Opposition

“I rise to speak on the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse bill. Australia has a very dark stain on its past with regards to abuse of children in institutions, whether they be state run institutions, church run institutions, sporting groups or community groups. It is something that we as a country should be embarrassed about and, quite frankly, ashamed of. It is good to see that at least there has been some sort of process done at both the federal and state levels to address and recognise the pain that tens of thousands of children suffered over many, many years. In fact in this day and age it is hard to believe how this could have gone on for so long unchallenged, and the enormous amount of pain, hurt and suffering from young people is frankly beyond belief and something that is very difficult to come to terms with.”

“I just want to put on the record my support for this bill. I congratulate the government on coming on board with this as well. I would also encourage any other institution that is yet to come on board to do so. It is important to own up to the mistakes that have been made, to say sorry and to help these poor, innocent victims somehow recover as much as they can from the tragedy that has been bestowed upon them.”

■ **Ms BOYD (Pine Rivers—ALP)**

“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.”

■ **Mr MOLHOEK (Southport—LNP)**

“It is, indeed, a very sobering piece of legislation that we are here to debate in the House today. I am glad that both sides of the House have indicated their support for the national redress scheme as proposed.”

■ **Ms PUGH (Mount Ommaney—ALP)**

“It is horrifying to acknowledge that some of this abuse was carried out in facilities that were state run. That is why I am so pleased and so proud that, as part of the legislation, the state will ultimately take responsibility for ensuring redress is made in circumstances where the relevant body is no longer active. These survivors have waited long enough to have their hurts acknowledged. As the member for Gaven has said, there is no amount of money that can right these wrongs, but it is about doing what is right. I commend this bill to the House.”

■ **Ms BATES (Mudgeeraba—LNP)**

“The establishment of a national redress scheme acknowledges that the abuse occurred. It is the most significant step in addressing the wrongs of the past and providing a just response to survivors. It is also an important step towards healing. It ensures governments and institutions take steps to safeguard against these crimes being repeated in the future.”

“The debate we are having today is about more than passing a bill, though, through this House or supporting a much needed scheme of redress. This bill is about righting a wrong. It is about ensuring that the countless victims of sexual abuse in their childhood are finally given the support, acknowledgement and remuneration they deserve. I am so proud that I have been part of the LNP which highlighted this issue nationally and announced this important policy which in turn saw legislation introduced into this House. Whilst the government’s bill has flaws which I and many colleagues have highlighted today, I am pleased to see a bipartisan approach taken to finally support the survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.”

■ **Mr STEWART (Townsville—ALP)**

“As a young teacher myself in the 1990s I would listen to Bruce tell story after story of barbaric treatment that the nuns and priests would inflict upon innocent children at these institutions. Bruce would also tell me that instances such as these were not confined to Neerkol but also occurred in other institutions such as Nazareth House, Silky Oaks and John Oxley. I am sure that if not for the work of Bruce Grundy during those early days of the 1990s when he was the editor of the independent newspaper and broke the story of Neerkol not only to Queenslanders but to the world, perhaps this legislation would not be being debated this afternoon.

I thank Bruce Grundy, my uncle, for his work over the many decades and, in doing so, I commend the government’s bill to the House.”

■ **Mr McDONALD (Lockyer—LNP)**

“The scheme provides the opportunity for victims to receive compensation and support without having to undergo the stress and trauma of court proceedings. In my previous role I have personally received complaints and heard stories of terrible abuse. I can tell members that I have seen lives lost to suicide as a direct result of the mental health problems caused by this abuse. This scheme is not a perfect solution and for some nothing will ever help repair the mental scars left by abuse or make up for the betrayal of these once trusted institutions. Nonetheless, for many victims of abuse, this scheme will go a long way to beginning the process of healing. It will help restore our community’s trust in institutions whose reputations have been torn to shreds.”

■ **Hon. G GRACE (McConnel—ALP)**

Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations

“This bill is all about us, as representatives of this parliament, as mature adults, putting politics aside and standing beside these victims. Let us pass this bill to give the redress that these victims deserve after the many decades of abuse that was found to have occurred by the Royal Commission. We must accept that institutional sexual abuse has been occurring for generations. It falls on the shoulders of the members of this parliament to be mature enough to stand up and pass this bill so that we can get the redress scheme working to assist these victims.”

“We cannot ignore what happened. The Commissioners were well aware of many of the measures that have been implemented already to better protect children and respond to the needs of survivors. I think the Minister has done an excellent job in putting those measures in place. As the Minister for Education, I have made sure that our educational institutions have also implemented policies to protect our children.”



■ Mr MILLAR (Gregory—LNP)

“The effects of the abuse suffered by these children has lasted their whole life long and has, in turn, affected their adult relationships, their work life and their family life. Despite the inevitable reawakening of old traumas by evidence emerging from the Royal Commission, these people were desperate for the events to be publicly acknowledged as historical fact and for their pain to be acknowledged as real. Indeed, part of the damage inflicted on them was the denial—by the perpetrators, by the institution and by society—that anything had happened. This bill is vital in completing that act of public recognition of what occurred at the hands of persons and institutions that should have been trustworthy but were the opposite.

This bill is vital in affording public acknowledgement of the pain endured by the victims. We acknowledge that pain by ensuring public redress is made. I know this does not undo the evil. That is impossible and it is not the purpose of the redress referred to in the bill title. The redress is a small public recognition of the past evils suffered by these victims. Old definitions of the word ‘redress’ define the term as having the meaning of ‘to set upright’ and I sincerely hope that this act of redress helps victims to set their world upright and that it contributes to them finding some peace.

Like many people in this House I am proud to welcome this bill. It is a necessary and overdue bill that will enable Queensland to participate in the federal government’s national redress scheme, but I must note how long it has taken to get to this point. It must seem like a very long road for those victims. The royal commission ran from 2013 until its final report in December 2016. Its proper title was the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The revelations of what had occurred were horrific. The fact that our educational, religious, sporting, youth and state institutions had covered up, had aided and abetted the abusers, was a devastating betrayal of the victims and of our Australian ideals.”

■ Mrs LAUGA (Keppel—ALP)

“It was the Royal Commission that revealed the full horror of what went on in the dormitories, the yards, the dining halls and the priests’ quarters not so long ago. Children were routinely slapped, flogged, starved, sodomised and ridiculed by nuns. There were public floggings, there was walking on children in high heels and forcing bedwetters to stand hungry in the dining room with their urine-soaked sheets draped over their heads while the other children ate breakfast. About 4,000 children, mostly state wards, passed through the orphanage over its 93 years of operation. I have personally met with many of these children, now adults, who experienced this horrific abuse at Neerkol and also others who experienced abuse in other institutions and they have told me how important this national redress scheme is to them to

acknowledge the harm suffered by them as children which is so important to their healing.

I extend my gratitude for the immense bravery of all who have shared their stories and to those who supported them through the royal commission, including organisations like Micah Projects and Lotus Place. Whilst no amount of money can compensate for their suffering, the national redress scheme is an important step towards healing. I commend the bill to the House.”

■ Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP)

“In rising to speak on this bill, it is acknowledged that these dreadful historic child sexual offences do not leave the memories of those who have to live with the legacy of damage not only in their own lives but also, tragically, so often in their own families as well. The wounds from these types of abuses go beyond just the physical, they deeply affect people’s relationships and deeply affect another generation in how they relate. Tragically, it is these sorts of legacies that even a redress scheme may not be able to fully address. But it is important and that is why we support the legislation before the House which provides a framework to make things better today even if it cannot rewrite the past.

There is a simple principle that whatever is done in secret will be shouted from the rooftops. When children are harmed these terrible, terrible crimes cannot be kept hidden forever. Tragically, the damage that is done in silence, behind closed doors and hidden in an abusive power imbalance is done before these stories come to light. That is why it was so important that those who were empowered and able to speak about the past had that opportunity to do so through the recent Royal Commission. We have heard the voices of victims speaking up and, tragically, the voices of families who have lost loved ones who took their lives because the pain was so great.”

■ Mrs GILBERT (Mackay—ALP)

“The national redress scheme stands to benefit many thousands of people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse in Queensland and offers the closure and support that they may not otherwise receive. On behalf of Francis, Cindy, the many Davids and Johns, Colin, Natalie, Janet, Shirley and their families, as well as many other adults, I commend the bill to the House. “

■ Mr BATT (Bundaberg—LNP)

“As we would all be aware, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse uncovered shocking, disturbing and often unfathomable abuse across various institutions, religious groups and government controlled entities. Some of the organisations that held our greatest trust and were supposed to care for our most vulnerable, our children, betrayed that trust, at times in the most heinous ways. Many years

later, people still suffer the mental and physical scars of that abuse. Organisations have been left with their reputations in tatters, having failed our children so badly. Our Australian community will take a very long time to heal from the shameful revelations of the inquiry.

The reality of what has been uncovered, having been covered up for so long, has meant that survivors can be heard, believed and begin the process of healing. It is because of a desire to commence that process of healing that the federal government has negotiated this redress scheme. Monetary compensation, apologies and counselling are offered under a system of application weighted heavily in favour of the victim, to ensure that they are not put through more trauma by having to gather or produce evidence to a standard of proof that may be required at a court level.”

“In conclusion, the national redress scheme is the beginning of the healing process. It is an opportunity for us as a community to acknowledge the failures of the past. It is an opportunity for organisations that have historically done so much good in the community to commence the process of rebuilding trust. This is a good system not a perfect system. It is a good system to begin the process of healing and making reparations to victims of child sex abuse. I support this bill before the House.”

■ Mr O’CONNOR (Bonney—LNP)

“I appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution on the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse (Commonwealth Powers) Bill. We have all seen the horrors reported during the royal commission that have led to these laws. The stories there will stay with fair-minded Australians for many years to come. This is a great day for the survivors of these horrible circumstances, but it is not good enough that they had to wait for so long. They will finally be able to access counselling, an apology from the institution involved and a monetary payment which will be in line with the national cap of \$150,000.”

“I would like to recognise Bravehearts, based in my electorate at Arundel. They have been supporting victims for many years through the Royal Commission process, preparing them for hearings and providing child safety training for many other organisations to ensure they are reporting any complaints properly to protect children. I am proud to represent them and praise their efforts at giving a voice to those who are often not able to speak for themselves.”

To see full text, visit:

www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/hansard/2018/2018_09_19_WEEKLY.pdf



An Excerpt from...

**To Prey and to Silence:
One Survivor's Story of
Child Sexual Abuse and
Her Fight for Justice**

by Joan Katherine Isaacs

“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.”



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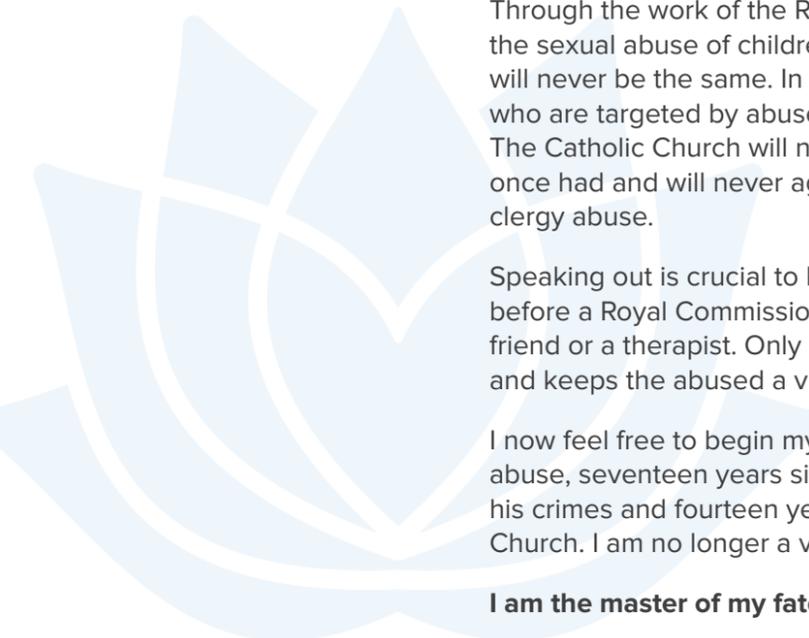
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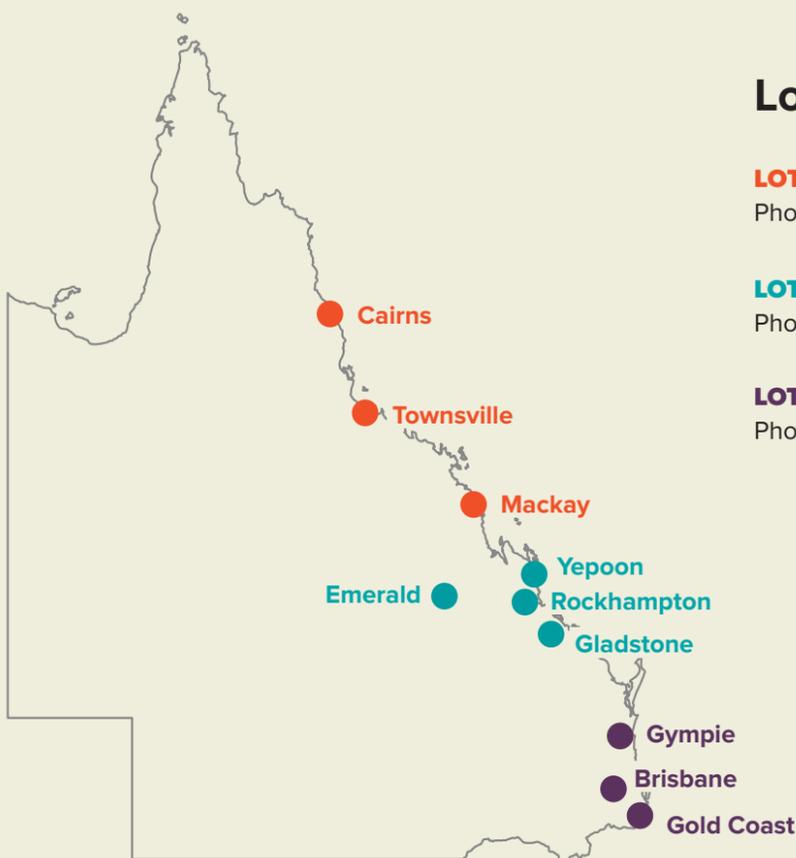


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We'd love to hear from you!

If you have a story to share, we would love you to be part of the Lotus Times Newsletter Writing Group for our next edition. Please email han@micahprojects.org.au for more details.