



# Alliance for Forgotten Australians

Patrons: Andrew Murray and Jack Thompson

## MEDIA RELEASE

29 July 2009

### **BREACH OF TRUST BY WA GOVERNMENT**

The Alliance for Forgotten Australians today deplored the decision of the WA Government to renege on its promise to people who were abused in care as children.

The Government has announced that more survivors of childhood abuse have come forward under its Redress Scheme than expected. The Government says it cannot afford to pay the promised \$80,000 to each qualifying victim and will cap payments at \$45,000 for even the most seriously abused.

Ms Caroline Carroll, Chair of the Alliance, today expressed deep disappointment and called on the WA Government to fulfil the commitments made to Forgotten Australians.

'The fact that more children were abused and have come forward than the former Government estimated is a cause for horror and sorrow,' Ms Carroll said. 'Remember, these children were the responsibility of the Government. WA has been praised in the recent Senate Inquiry for its Redress Scheme; unhappily, that scheme is now in tatters.

'No amount of money can give these adults back their lives: the opportunities they missed, the security and good health that are every child's right, the mental stability that trauma has ripped away from them. But we must, as a society, acknowledge their pain and offer redress, allowing them to make decisions about what their immediate needs are. Many promises were broken for these children, and their trust as adults is hard to win. They came forward, told their stories and, in doing so, relived their horrific abuse. Another act of betrayal by the Government will be the last straw for some of them.

'The WA Government should not only meet the commitments already made to Forgotten Australians; it should also keep the scheme open. Applications have been low, compared to the number of children who suffered in institutions in WA. We think this is because services and support organisations do not exist in WA, and people are reluctant to come forward. Redress should be accompanied by ongoing services and support, including deep-trauma counselling and targeted training and health care.'

Ms Carroll called on the WA Government to face the consequences of Government failures to care for children and to commit the funds that are needed to care for them as adults.

For further information, contact Caroline Carroll on 03 9094 3527 or 0438 460 184 or the AFA Secretariat on 02 6273 4885 or 0407 343 741.