



Redress WA

No: 2 November 2009

Newsletter

National Apology to Forgotten Australians

On 16 November 2009, the Australian Government took the important step of offering a national apology to Forgotten Australians and former child migrants to recognise the ongoing hurt suffered by children in care.

Approximately 500,000 people are believed to be in the group known as the Forgotten Australians including former child migrants and many continue to suffer from the effects of the abuse and neglect they experienced while in care.

The State Government held an event at Government House to mark this special occasion with many Redress WA applicants attending to watch a live broadcast from Canberra to hear Prime Minister Kevin Rudd deliver this historic apology. Minister for Community Services Robyn McSweeney addressed the group and hosted the event with the Premier the Hon Colin Barnett also in attendance.

Redress WA hope this national apology and recognition of the abuse and neglect Western Australian applicants suffered in care will provide a further opportunity to heal.

During this time, Redress WA again encourage you to take advantage of the counselling services available that may assist in your healing process. Please refer to the *'Support Services for WA care leavers'* booklet enclosed for more information.

New \$5,000 Eligibility Payment announced

Redress WA acknowledges that some applicants are unfortunately experiencing terminal or life threatening illnesses and may not survive to have their ex-gratia payments paid to them.

In recognition of this, Minister for Community Services Robyn McSweeney announced a new \$5,000 Eligibility Payment in September 2009 to be paid to the deceased estates of eligible applicants who pass away before their ex-gratia payments are approved.

This change recognises applicants who have not applied for an interim payment, were in the process of having their interim payment approved and for applicants who pass away suddenly.

Redress WA encourages all applicants to prepare a legal Will as it makes the process of paying the \$5,000 Eligibility Payment less stressful and complicated for your family.

The Eligibility Payment has been backdated to include applicants who have passed away since the Redress WA scheme opened. Applicants are reminded that if they are suffering from a terminal or life threatening condition that can be verified by a medical practitioner, they can still apply for an interim payment of up to \$10,000.



Applicants come from all walks of life

Of the 10,000 names registered with Redress WA when the scheme closed in April 2009, approximately 5,900 applications are eligible for the next stage of formal assessment.

From the information applicants have provided, Redress WA applicants are known to come from all walks of life including:

- **children from Aboriginal communities** (represents 50 % of all applicants);
- **former child migrants** who were sent to Western Australia from other Commonwealth countries (represents 13% of all applicants); and
- other children who for various reasons were **placed in State care** (remaining 37% of all applicants).

There is nearly an equal amount of male and female applicants and almost 90% of all applicants still live in Western Australia.

“**The majority of Redress WA applicants are aged between 50 and 70 years of age (48.2%), with more than 60% of all applicants aged 50 years and over**”

How can I get urgent help?

If you need help urgently, we recommend you:

- Speak to your doctor (GP or psychiatrist),
- Call Lifeline on 13 11 14 (24 hours),
- Call Crisis Care on 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008 (24 hours),
- Call Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636 (24 hours), or
- Call or visit your nearest hospital.

Monument to acknowledge strength of WA Care Leavers

More than 56,000 Western Australians spent part of their childhood or teenage years in some form of out-of-home care over the last 100 years.

The State Government is currently finalising plans to build a monument which will be placed near the entrance of the WA Museum in the Perth Cultural Precinct to honour the strength of care leavers and the fact that many suffered abuse and neglect while in care.

The Department for Child Protection is overseeing the project and working with care leavers; Redress WA; The Department of Culture and the Arts; the Art Gallery of WA; the Heritage Council of WA; and the East Perth Redevelopment Authority, to design an appropriate monument. It is hoped the monument will be completed by the end of 2010.

Over \$2 Million spent on support

While some applicants said applying to Redress WA felt a weight was lifted from their shoulders, others said the experience was distressing and extremely difficult. For this reason, support services were available to applicants since the scheme opened in May 2008.

Over 3,000 people have received support from the 26 Redress WA service providers, and \$2.359 million has been spent on these services since July 2008.

All applicants should feel extremely proud of the courage they have shown, and recognise that applying to Redress was a major step in acknowledging their experience during a troubling time in WA's history.

Please take a look at the **Support Services for WA care leavers** booklet for information on the help available to applicants and WA care leavers.

Have you moved house or have a new contact number?

If your circumstances have changed it is important to tell Redress WA so your details can be updated. Please call us on Freecall **1800 617 233** (charges apply from mobiles) or **(08) 6217 8720** (standard call charges apply) to do this.

Update on payments

Redress WA has been working as quickly as possible to assess your applications and it is likely the first round of payments will be made early in 2010.

Approximately 100 applications at a time will be randomly selected for assessment. Redress WA will contact you or your nominated representative when your application is due for assessment to give you the final opportunity to add or clarify any details to further support your claim.

If your health circumstances change where you are diagnosed with a life threatening illness that can be confirmed by a medical report, you may be eligible to receive an interim payment of up to \$10,000.

Applicants who are seriously ill and have already received an Interim Payment will be very pleased to learn that Redress WA is working towards paying the balance of their payment before the end of March 2010.

Making a WILL, makes sense

Current statistics show that roughly half of all Australians pass away without having a legal and valid Will. Preparing a Will is important at any age as it ensures your final wishes are carried out when you pass away.

Having a Will also means your money, including the new \$5,000 Eligibility Payment your Estate is entitled to if you pass away before receiving your Redress WA ex-gratia payment, will be distributed according to your wishes.

If you pass away without a Will it makes the process for paying your \$5,000 Eligibility Payment a lengthier and possibly more stressful process for your intended beneficiaries.

Legal Will kits are available from any Australian Post Office outlet however it is important that you follow the instructions very carefully to ensure your Will is considered a legal document. Alternatively, the Public Trustees or the Citizens Advice Bureau can provide you with assistance for a fee, or you may choose to have a lawyer review your Will to make sure everything is in order.

As this is an important issue for Redress WA applicants, Connect Groups can organise information sessions with practical assistance to create a legal Will. If you are interested in attending this type of group session, please call Connect Groups on **(08) 9228 4488** or Freecall **1800 195 575**, to register your interest.

Do you have additional or missing information to add to your application?

Redress WA will contact you to finalise your application when it is being assessed. In the meantime if you wish to provide Redress WA with additional information that can further support your claim, please send it to **Locked Bag 6, West Perth WA 6872**.

Please be advised that the service providers who supported people to complete their applications are no longer funded to respond to general enquiries, so please direct all enquiries to Redress WA.

“Redress WA has been working as quickly as possible to assess your applications and it is likely the first round of payments will be made early in 2010”

Contact Redress WA

Office hours: 9.00 – 4.30pm, Monday- Friday

Freecall: 1800 617 233 (charges apply from mobiles)

Telephone: 61 8 6217 8720 (standard call charges apply)

Email: info@redress.wa.gov.au

Post: Locked Bag 6, WEST PERTH WA 6872

Website: www.redress.wa.gov.au

Please note that Redress WA
will be closed on the following public holidays:

- Friday 25 December 2009
- Monday 28 December 2009
 - Friday 1 January 2010
- Tuesday 26 January 2010

Should you need help when Redress WA
is closed, please call one of the organisations
listed under ***“How can I get urgent help”***.
