



# Redress WA

## No: 1 August 2009

# Newsletter



### Your bravery recognised

**Over 10,000 people in Western Australia took the courageous step to register with Redress WA by the time the scheme closed on April 30, 2009.**

Redress WA understands the decision to revisit your past has been an extremely difficult and painful process. For many, we acknowledge this may be the first time you have shared your story of neglect and abuse as a child in the care of the State.

Redress WA respects that many of you still experience emotional trauma and hardship as a direct result of the neglect and abuse you suffered. In recognition of this, Redress WA is treating all applications with the sensitivity and understanding they deserve.

### Update on the scheme

**When Redress WA was established in 2008, a total budget of \$114 million was allocated to administer the scheme. \$90.2 million of this funding was set aside for ex-gratia payments alone.**

Following the close of the scheme, early evaluation of the applications shows a large number of the claims are severe.

Because of this and the large number of claims Redress WA has received, the State Government has made the difficult decision to adjust ex-gratia payments of up to \$80,000 to a maximum payment of \$45,000.

The decision to adjust the maximum payment recognises the fact that most people will be entitled to a greater share of payment than was originally anticipated.

The State Government has a responsibility to fairly and equally distribute ex-gratia payments among all claimants. Redress WA acknowledges the decision to lower the maximum amount payable will disappoint many of you who have applied to the scheme.

### Your stories of courage

**Many applicants have told Redress WA that since applying to the scheme, they have experienced many unexpected emotions.**

They have told Redress WA they see it as more than an opportunity to receive a payment and realise that it offers a healing process. Detailed below are the kinds of comments that we have received from applicants about their experience with Redress:

**“This has been so painful, but I know sharing my experience of abuse is a positive step towards resolving the problems that have arisen from trying to lock away my traumatic memories.”**

**“I feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders.”**

**“I was afraid that no one would believe me but having my experience recognised has been really important.”**

**“I went into care at such a early age, I thought the abuse was normal – the Redress process has made me understand what impact it has had on my life.”**

**“I realise I am not alone and I am looking forward to meeting people in the Redress support groups who have had similar experiences when they were kids.”**

**HAVE YOU MOVED HOUSE OR HAVE A NEW CONTACT NUMBER?**

Make sure you contact Redress WA on 1800 617 233 to update your details.

## When can I expect my payment?

**Redress WA understands that many of you are anxious about the assessment of your application - in particular how long it might take to receive your payment.**

Redress WA has started to carefully assess your applications and hopes to offer the first round of payments this December. Approximately 500 claims will be assessed and processed every few months, with all payments to be distributed by mid 2011.

Redress WA will contact you or your nominated representative when your application is due for assessment. This is to give you the final opportunity to add or clarify any details that can further support your claim.

Redress WA will treat each application with the consideration it deserves. We thank you in advance for your patience while we assess all your claims.

### 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.

## Redress WA

**Office hours:** 9.00am – 4.30pm, Mon-Fri

**Freecall:** 1800 617 233

**Post:** Locked Bag 6, West Perth WA 6872

**Email:** [info@redress.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@redress.wa.gov.au)

**Website:** [www.redress.wa.gov.au](http://www.redress.wa.gov.au)

## 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.

## My circumstances have changed

If your circumstances change in the near future, for example you have moved to a new address, it is important to tell Redress WA so your details can be updated. 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.

## Extra support

While Redress WA is assessing your application, you may find it valuable to talk to a counsellor to discuss any issues that may be affecting you.

If you are feeling upset or distressed, you can call Redress WA on 1800 617 233 to speak to a social worker who can put you in touch with a range of support services including Crisis Care, Community Legal Services, financial counsellors, and government funded community services that provide individual and/or group counselling.

If you need it, your doctor can also help you develop a Mental Health Care Plan and provide referrals to a psychologist, psychiatrist or social worker. So that you are not out of pocket, Medicare rebates can also be claimed for up to twelve individual and twelve group sessions per calendar year.

## You are not alone

Redress WA is working with Connect Groups and various community organisations to offer a range of group sessions for Redress applicants. These groups allow people the opportunity to come together to provide each other with support that many people find valuable when revisiting painful memories and experiences.

Sessions are free for Redress WA applicants and you can contact Connect Groups on 1800 195 575 or visit [www.connectgroups.org.au](http://www.connectgroups.org.au) for more information.