

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

Thursday, 13 March 2014

881. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Community Services.

Regarding the application to the Redress WA scheme by Mr Wayne Gordon of Yiyili Community in the Kimberley Western Australia, I ask:

(a) in acknowledgement of the hardships experienced by Mr Gordon in the Charles Perkins Hostel when he was just eight years old, will the Minister re-open the Redress WA scheme or establish a new similar scheme;

(b) in acknowledgement of the remote community in which Mr Gordon lives and the limited means of communication available to its residents, will the Minister re-open the Redress WA scheme, or establish a new similar scheme, with a longer advertising period to properly enable all eligible applicants to participate:

(i) if no to (a) and (b), why not; and

(ii) if yes to (a) and (b), what steps will the Minister take; and

(c) is the Minister aware that, without access to some form of redress, Mr Gordon is suffering double jeopardy, that through no fault of his own he is being punished twice, once by being taken from his family at the age of eight and placed in the Charles Perkins Hostel, and now again when he is being denied such compensation as should be his due under the Redress WA scheme:

(i) if yes to (c), will the Minister show compassion and re-open the Redress WA scheme or establish a new similar one?

Answer

(a) Redress WA closed on the 31st December 2011. While I acknowledge that there were those who missed out on applying for a Redress payment, there are no plans to reopen the scheme.

(b) I acknowledge that Mr Gordon lives in a remote community; however, extensive advertising was undertaken to promote the Redress WA scheme to ensure it was as widely promoted as possible. These promotion activities included Redress staff travelling throughout the State to conduct information meetings, including visits to the Kimberley, the Pilbara and Gascoyne regions. The scheme also extended its original closing deadline by an additional three months to assist those who needed more time to submit their applications. Further to this, Redress WA staff contracted several service providers state-wide to assist applicants to prepare their applications. These included the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia, the Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation, the Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service and the Dumbartung Aboriginal Corporation. A legal firm was also contracted by Redress WA to visit the Balgo Aboriginal Community to assist with the preparation of applications for submission.

- (i) Redress WA was a compassionate scheme that provided the opportunity for those affected to tell their stories, be believed and receive an ex-gratia payment as an acknowledgement. It was a finite scheme with a comprehensive communications strategy and applicant assistance structure that incorporated a targeted approach for Aboriginal community members.
- (ii) Not applicable
- (c) It is unfortunate that Mr Gordon missed out on lodging a claim for a Redress WA ex-gratia payment. If he wishes, he can submit his story to the Commonwealth Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which may assist in acknowledging his State care experiences as a child.
- (i) There are no plans to reopen the Redress WA scheme or establish a new one.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a trailing flourish, positioned below the text.