

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Question on notice

Wednesday, 7 May 2014

1201. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Community Services.

Regarding the application by Ms Ethel Walalgie of Halls Creek to the Redress Scheme Western Australia, I ask:

(a) is the Minister aware of the claim made by Ms Walalgie that she has made an application to the Department of Communities under the Redress Scheme Western Australia during the time that it was open, an application that was apparently never received by the department, for which there is no explanation and has been no investigation:

(i) if yes to (a), is the Minister also aware that Ms Walalgie has requested that the Government re-open the Redress Scheme Western Australia, especially for Aboriginal people living in remote parts of Western Australia;

(ii) if yes to (a) and (a)(i), will the Minister re-open the Redress Scheme Western Australia and order an investigation; and

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

(b) is the Minister aware of the circumstances of Ms Walalgie's childhood at Moola Boola near Halls Creek and the United Aborigines Mission in Fitzroy Crossing, and the physical and psychological abuse she claims she suffered at the hands of the staff there:

(i) if yes to (b), does the Minister think that this sort of treatment is ever warranted and justified;

(ii) if yes to (b), does the Minister consider some form of compensation should be forthcoming to ease the hurt; and

(iii) if no to (b) and (b)(i) and (b)(ii), why not?

Answer

(a) No.

(i)-(ii) Not applicable

(iii) While I acknowledge that there are those who did miss out on applying, there are no plans to reopen the Redress WA scheme.

(b) Having read the account (that was sent through to the Department of Local Government and Communities by the Kimberley Community Legal Service in December last year) of Ms Walalgie's childhood experiences, I regret that she missed out on lodging a claim. If she wishes, she can submit her story to the Commonwealth Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse if you believe this will assist in acknowledging her State care experiences as a child. However, she unfortunately will not be able to receive an ex gratia payment.

(i) No

(ii) See (a)(iii) above.

(iii) See (a)(iii) above.

WBF