



12<sup>th</sup> March 2015

Dear Presidents,

**Re: Development of a YMCA redress scheme**

At its most recent meeting the National Board considered a discussion paper on the topic of redress as it relates to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.

YMCA Australia's own investigations estimate that there may be as many as twenty known cases of past abuse which occurred within YMCAs and where victims/survivors may have a case for redress. The Royal Commission have informed us that to date thirty individuals have come forward in private sessions with experiences of abuse in the YMCA. By 2017 (when the Commission concludes) this figure will undoubtedly have increased.

At present the Movement is engaging with a small number of these cases but it is most likely, if the trends that emerged through Royal Commissions of this nature in other countries are to be followed in Australia that the number will increase over the next few years as the Commission continues its work. We also know that those individuals who have come forward to the Royal Commission represent a small proportion of the real number of people affected in the community.

Over the past six months, YMCA Australia has been actively involved in consultations with the Royal Commission into the Commission's work in developing guidelines for a redress scheme.

The Royal Commission describes elements of redress as including:

- *a direct personal response by the institution if the survivor wishes to engage with the institution, including an apology, an opportunity for the survivor to meet with a senior representative of the institution and an assurance as to the steps the institution has taken, or will take, to protect against further abuse*
- *access to therapeutic counselling and psychological care as needed throughout a survivor's life, with redress to supplement existing services and fill service gaps so that all survivors can have access to the counselling and psychological care that they need*
- *Monetary payments as a tangible means of recognising the wrong survivors have suffered.*

In addition to actively contributing to the Commission's consultation process, the National Board has also commenced work to establish a process for the development of an approach to redress that is consistent with the Movement's values. We have commenced this process because while the Royal Commission will be recommending the establishment of a national or state/territory based redress scheme, this could be many years away and there is an expectation that organisations will adopt interim measures.

The National Board considered its approach to redress at its February meeting, informed also by a joint meeting with the National Leadership Team (NLT). It was agreed that the work toward redress should progress in the following ways:

- a detailed project plan for the development of a Redress Scheme in collaboration with Associations

**YMCA AUSTRALIA**

ABN: 45 004 076 297

Level 1, 88 Market Street  
South Melbourne VIC 3205

(03) 9699 7655

(03) 9699 2365

admin@ymca.org.au





- establishment of a reference group to lead this process
- development of policy options and approaches regarding redress
- detailed modelling of costs and options for funding models.

The project plan will bring together the key elements required for Movement collaboration in the development and implementation of a national policy and model for redress across the YMCA in Australia. Key milestones will be built into the project plan including further refinement of the overarching policy approach, actuarial modelling to inform possible funding options and a communications plan (internal and external).

Timeframes within the project plan will be focused on key consultation points with the Movement. Integral to this will be the CEO and Board Engagement Strategy which will occur during March-April-May.

The Presidents' Forum in July will provide a pivotal opportunity to consider progress on this work and seek consensus on our approach to redress, with further consultation to take place prior to the November AGM.

The Board will draw on relevant expertise and experience from across the Movement and the community to ensure the Movement is properly informed regarding our options.

In summary:

- The development of a redress scheme is an important initiative which will ensure victims/survivors of child sexual abuse within the YMCA are properly supported and their issues addressed.
- The policy and funding options will be circulated for comment over the next few months, leading up to a further draft being presented and discussed at the Presidents' Forum on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> July.
- Boards and CEOs will have the opportunity to discuss this in detail with the YMCA Australia staff and National Board members through your scheduled Board meetings over the coming months.
- Our goal is to be ready to present the redress scheme and funding model for endorsement by the Members at the November 2015 Annual General Meeting.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself, any of the National Board, the National CEO or Jacki Whitwell (Executive Manager, Social Policy), should you have any queries or comment.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew C. Smith  
President  
YMCA AUSTRALIA

c.c.: CEOs

**YMCA AUSTRALIA**

ABN: 45 004 076 297

Level 1, 88 Market Street  
South Melbourne VIC 3205

(03) 9699 7655

(03) 9699 2365

admin@ymca.org.au

