

Commonwealth of Australia

Submission on Issues Paper 10 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Advocacy and Support and Therapeutic Treatment Services

INTRODUCTION

1. The Commonwealth welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission in response to *Issues Paper 10: Advocacy and Support and Therapeutic Treatment Services*, released by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission).
2. Department of Social Services (DSS) currently funds 37 organisations to provide community-based support services to people who are affected through their engagement with the Royal Commission.
3. Four of these services are funded specifically to provide information, referrals and counselling through national telephone and online services.
4. There are 15 state and territory-based services as well as specialist support services for men, women, people with disability, Indigenous Australians, Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants, and people who have experienced religious/clerical abuse. There are also independent representative organisations, including services specifically for Forgotten Australians, people with disability, and people who have experienced religious/clerical abuse.
5. In addition, four organisations were funded in the first two years of the Royal Commission to provide training to support service providers. The training was designed to inform service delivery practice across the support services for the duration of the Royal Commission. The organisations who delivered training services were the Australian Childhood Trauma Group, the Adults Surviving Child Abuse, the Lighthouse Foundation and the Mental Health Professionals Network.
6. A list of the current Royal Commission Community-based Support Services (RCSS), along with a brief description of their service offering, is provided at Attachment A.
7. Most of the support services commenced from 1 July 2013. Following the identification of specific service gaps, additional services were funded to ensure there were suitable specialist support services focusing on the needs of people living with disability, Indigenous Australians or people who have suffered from religious/clerical abuse.
8. The Australian Government initially provided \$45 million for the provision of community-based support services. Following the Government's announcement in 2014 to extend the Royal Commission, a further \$25 million will be provided to continue delivery of these services to 30 June 2018.

ROYAL COMMISSION COMMUNITY-BASED SUPPORT SERVICES

9. RCSS deliver free services such as counselling, support and case management to individuals and their family members before, during and after their interaction with the Royal Commission.

10. RCSS are underpinned by evidence-based practice, design and delivery principles that ensure:
 - a tailored, flexible and holistic approach to support each client's needs
 - the importance of validating and respecting the different histories of people affected by former policies and practices
 - the client is central to all service design and delivery
 - people are empowered to make their own informed choices about their healing
11. Providers must employ suitably qualified staff with experience in working with complex trauma and an understanding of the complex emotional support and therapeutic needs of people affected by past institutional practices and policies.
12. When delivering services providers must comply with all relevant laws which include any state based working with children checks. In addition providers are required to comply with further conditions imposed by the department regarding working with vulnerable persons.
13. All RCSS must demonstrate independence from organisations or individuals that may have been involved with past institutional practices and policies before entering into grant agreements.
14. The organisation must also provide information about any potential conflicts of interest (actual or perceived) arising from any involvement with past institutional practices and policies. Where links to these institutions exist, organisations are required to be transparent and, where necessary, publicly acknowledge their involvement in past practices and confirm their commitment to deliver high-quality and independent services.
15. A significant number of people participating in the Royal Commission are also receiving support through Australian Government funded Forced Adoption Support Services, for people affected by forced adoption and removal practices and policies, and the Find and Connect Service, for Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants.

CLIENT NUMBERS AND DEMOGRAPHICS

16. Since 1 July 2013, RCSS have provided over 164,800 client activities. Activities can include intake and assessment, information and referral, education and skills training, counselling, assistance in preparing a submission, support (including to attend a Royal Commission hearing), community capacity building and development, and case management. Table 1 provides the RCSS' client demographics for 2013-2015.

17. Table 1: Client demographics for Royal Commission Community-based Support Services 2013-2015

Client demographics	2013–14	2014–15
Total activities*	38,191	126,610
Gender		
Male	37%	43%
Female	63%	56%
Not stated	<1%	<1%
Groups		
Indigenous Australians	3%	3%
People living with disability	5%	10%
Care Leavers - for example Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants	69%	69%
Culturally and linguistically diverse people	2%	2%
Other	21%	16%

* These figures reflect the number of activities undertaken by clients rather than unique client counts.

18. To date, the most common activity provided by RCSS since their establishment has been providing information and referrals for clients, with almost 32 per cent of clients participating in this activity. The second highest activity, at 18 per cent, has been counselling provided to assist clients and their families to manage relationship issues.
19. Support service providers have also reported that almost 10 per cent of their work has been in building and developing community capacity. This activity includes community education, service promotion and networking with other stakeholders to share knowledge and establish referral pathways.
20. Since July 2013, almost 3,900 activities have been provided to assist clients to prepare a submission for the Royal Commission, with a further 1,015 activities supporting clients to attend a Royal Commission hearing.
21. Table 2 provides the distribution of support services by state and territory. The majority of RCSS services have been provided in New South Wales followed by Victoria and Queensland. The demand for services correlates with the majority of public hearings held by the Royal Commission.
22. Table 2: Royal Commission Community-based Support Services activity distribution 2014-2015

State and territory	Percentage of activities
Australian Capital Territory	2%
New South Wales	56%
Northern Territory	<1%
Queensland	18%
South Australia	4%
Tasmania	<1%
Victoria	19%
Western Australia	1%

23. During July 2014 to June 2015, the four national services provided 27,432 online sessions and 23,724 telephone sessions with the majority of clients seeking information, support or counselling. Specialist and state and territory-based services deliver about 52 per cent of their services using telephone or internet facilities, with the other activities provided through face-to-face settings, including outreach, home visiting and group events.
24. RCSS also provide support to people in the criminal justice system who have engaged with the Royal Commission. Following Royal Commission submissions and private hearings in NSW prisons, it is estimated that over 60 inmates have been referred to RCSS for counselling and support.

SERVICE DELIVERY CHALLENGES

25. The RCSS have reported a number of challenges in delivering support to people affected by the Royal Commission as outlined below:
 - the challenge to deliver support services to people in regional, rural and remote areas
 - providing culturally appropriate support services to a diverse range of client groups, in particular Indigenous Australians and delivering services to people with disability
 - managing fluctuations in the demand for services in response to the location of Royal Commission hearings and activity. As a result, it can be difficult for RCSS to manage their resources and to cope with sharp increases in client numbers. In comparison, some areas have experienced a low uptake of services
 - the need for more intensive and episodic support required to meet the complex needs of some clients before, during and after Royal Commission hearings, and
 - engaging with people in the criminal justice system.
26. It is anticipated the detail of these challenges will be identified in submissions made by individual support services. The department will examine the service delivery challenges and consult with services to ensure new funding arrangements with RCSS address service challenges and gaps where possible.

ATTACHMENT A – LIST OF SERVICES

Royal Commission Community-based Support Services	
National Services	
Adults Surviving Child Abuse	Counselling and support services for survivors.
Bravehearts Pty Ltd	Counselling and support services for survivors as well as child protection advocacy.
Child Wise	Trauma informed telephone and online counselling for childhood abuse. Training and organisational capacity building on child abuse prevention
Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia	24/7 telephone and online crisis counselling service for anyone in Australia who has experienced or is at risk of sexual assault.
Specialist services	
<i>Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants</i>	
Care Leavers Australasia Network	Support and advocacy for Care Leavers and Forgotten Australians.
Micah Projects Inc	A dedicated support service and resource centre for Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants.
Open Place	Find and Connect services, counselling, advocacy and support services to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants.
Child Migrants Trust	Social work services, including counselling and support for family reunions.
<i>Indigenous Australians</i>	
WA - Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation	Counselling, healing and culturally appropriate support for Indigenous Australians.
WA - Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation	
VIC - Link Up Victoria	
NSW - Link Up NSW Aboriginal Corporation	
SA - Nunkuwarrin Yunti of SA Inc.	
QLD - Link Up (QLD)	
NT - Danila Dilba	
Indigenous Provider Capacity Building - Healing Foundation	Service to help build the capacity of Indigenous organisations
<i>People with Disability</i>	
People with Disability Australia	National telephone line to provide information and referrals to people with disability.
Children with Disability Australia	National information, referrals and education services to people with disability.

Royal Commission Community-based Support Services	
Men	
Living Well	Counselling and support services to the community.
On the Line Australia Inc	National telephone and online support, information and referral service for men with family and relationship concerns.
Women	
The Women's Cottage	Community based support and resource centre, run by women, for women and children.
Religious/Clergy Abuse	
Tzedek	Advocacy, referrals and support services to people who have experienced religious/clergy abuse, with a focus on the Jewish community.
In Good Faith Foundation	Advocacy, restorative justice and case management services to people who have experienced religious and lay abuse.
Australian Capital Territory	
Canberra Rape Crisis Centre	Services and programmes to eliminate sexual violence against women, young people, children and men.
New South Wales	
Interrelate Family Centres	Community based organisation with a network of counselling centres across metropolitan, regional and rural NSW.
NSW Rape Crisis Centre (Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia)	Face to face and online crisis counselling service for people in NSW who have experienced or are at risk of sexual assault.
Relationships Australia NSW	Family and relationship counselling as well as a range of specialist counselling services.
Northern Territory	
Relationships Australia NT	Family and relationship counselling as well as a range of specialist counselling services.
Queensland	
Centre Against Sexual Violence	Community based sexual assault service dedicated to service the sexual assault support, education and information needs of the Logan, Beenleigh and Beaudesert communities.
Relationships Australia QLD	Family and relationship counselling as well as a range of specialist counselling services.
South Australia	
Relationships Australia South Australia Health Promotion Services	Family and relationship counselling as well as a range of specialist counselling services, particularly in the areas of mental health, suicide prevention, children and trauma.

Royal Commission Community-based Support Services	
Victim Support Service Incorporated	Support to adult victims of crime, witnesses, their family and friends across South Australia.
Tasmania	
Relationships Australia Tasmania	Family and relationship counselling as well as a range of specialist counselling services.
Sexual Assault Support Service Inc. (Tasmanian federation)	Community based service committed to providing high quality support and information services to survivors of sexual assault.
Victoria	
Drummond Street Services Inc	Family based counselling and support programmes for children, young people and families including specialised trauma recovery services.
Relationships Australia VIC	Family and relationship counselling as well as a range of specialist counselling services.
Western Australia	
Anglicare WA Incorporated	Support service for individuals, families and their communities to build resilience and capacity.
Relationships Australia WA	Family and relationship counselling as well as a range of specialist counselling services.