

National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

The Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, has announced that he will deliver the **National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse** by the end of 2018. This announcement follows the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse releasing its final report on 15 December 2017.

The National Apology will be shaped and informed by the wishes and views of victims and survivors. To facilitate this, a national consultation process is being undertaken to reach out to survivors and those affected by child sexual abuse, to invite their contribution to the development of the National Apology.

The Government has also appointed the National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse Reference Group, to advise it on the form and content of the National Apology. The views shared during the national consultation process will inform the Reference Group's advice about what the National Apology should reflect and how it should be delivered.

The National Apology website

All survivors and interested persons are encouraged to share their views about the National Apology during the consultation process via the dedicated **National Apology website** – www.nationalapologyconsultation.gov.au.

It is our privilege to hear from you and all contributions about how the National Apology can be made meaningful to victims and survivors are welcome.

Sharing your views through the website is confidential – you do not need to provide any information about yourself, but will have the option to identify whether you are a survivor, family of a victim or survivor, or if you are affiliated with a particular survivor organisation. You do not need to provide your name or contact details.

National Apology consultation meetings

Face-to-face consultation meetings will take place in all capital cities, as well as in a small number of regional areas over May – July 2018. Equal weight will be given to all views, whether they are provided in a consultation meeting or through the National Apology website.

Information about consultation meetings is below.

About the consultation meetings

Approximately 12 invited survivors or persons affiliated with survivor organisations will attend each consultation meeting. The consultation meetings will run for up to 90 minutes, commencing at 9.30am, 1pm and 3pm.

The meetings will be facilitated by a psychologist with expertise in trauma-informed approaches, to ensure the discussions are undertaken in a respectful, safe and inclusive environment. A separate counsellor/psychologist will be available at all consultation meetings in the event that attendees require support or assistance.

Two Members of the National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse Reference Group will attend each meeting, to ensure the Reference Group is hearing directly from survivors. Two staff from the National Apology Secretariat within the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, and one representative from the Department of Social Services, will also attend the meetings, to address any questions about the work the Australian Government is undertaking following the Royal Commission, and to address any questions about the National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse.

Water, tea and coffee, and biscuits will be provided at all consultation meetings.

Hearing from you at a consultation meeting

At the outset of the consultation meeting, you will be welcomed by a Member of the Reference Group, who will introduce the meeting facilitator and other people attending in a support capacity. All attendees will be asked to ensure that they act and contribute to the meeting in a manner which is respectful of others' experiences and views.

The facilitator will then lead a discussion on the following questions:

- **What would you most like the Prime Minister to address in the National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse?** *For example, how should the impact of child sexual abuse on victims and survivors be addressed, as well as the impact on their families and communities?*
- **What words or phrases are important to include in the National Apology, to ensure it reflects the wishes of survivors?**
- **What words or phrases should be avoided in the National Apology?** *For example, what words or phrases might be unhelpful to include?*
- **How can the ceremony to deliver the National Apology be arranged to ensure it is meaningful to victims and survivors?** *For example, how can we ensure the event is centred on survivors? Who should be invited to attend?*
- **Are there particular things we should consider to ensure the National Apology ceremony is accessible and inclusive for survivors?** *For example, what travel or other support would assist to support survivors to attend the ceremony?*

Due to time constraints and the need for all attendees to have the chance to speak if they wish, it will be necessary for the discussion to remain focussed on these questions and issues. The facilitator will guide the discussion to ensure it remains on track.

If you find on the day you do not want to, or are unable to provide your input, you can provide your views in writing through a form that will be available on the day, or at a later time through the National Apology website.

Privacy and confidentiality

If you attend a consultation meeting, the only information about you that will be made available to the facilitator, the National Apology Secretariat or the National Apology Reference Group, will be your first name.

Views expressed during the consultation meetings will be captured by the Secretariat in a general way, to inform the development of the National Apology, without identifying or attributing views to any person or organisation.

Location and accessibility

The consultation meetings will take place in the CBD of each consultation location. Access for people with disability will be available. Further information will be provided to those who are confirmed to attend.