

Meeting of the Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Taskforce

Brisbane – 6 February 2020

COMMUNIQUE

The Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Taskforce (the Taskforce) held its first meeting for 2020 in Brisbane, where members shaped the priorities for the year and announced an expansion of its Terms of Reference.

Expansion of the Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Taskforce Terms of Reference

On 14 December 2019, the Premier and Minister for Trade approved an expansion of the Taskforce Terms of Reference to include serious physical and emotional abuse. This reflects the recent changes to Queensland laws which expand the removal of the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse to also include serious child physical and connected psychological abuse. The Taskforce can now provide advice on institutional child abuse, encompassing institutional child sexual, physical and emotional abuse. For more information on the amendments to our Terms of Reference please see the Taskforce website.

National Redress Gathering in Cairns

In December last year, Mr Mike Wragge, Taskforce member attended the National Redress Gathering in Cairns, hosted by the Healing Foundation. At the February 2020 Taskforce meeting, Mike provided members with an overview of the conference. Some of the themes from the conference was the importance of culturally safe trauma informed practice, information and resources as well as supporting the health and wellbeing of staff assisting people to make applications. Many guest speakers presented at the conference including knowmore Legal Service and The Seedling Group. People who attended the conference also commented on how useful it was to hear from and support each other.

People with lived experience contact with the Taskforce

People with lived experience of institutional child abuse are contacting the Taskforce to share their experience and their views on changing policy and practice, to ensure the issues of the past do not occur in the future. The Taskforce is open to hearing from people with lived experience through any forms including face to face, email, telephone and letters.

National Redress Scheme

At each meeting, the Taskforce is provided with an update on the National Redress Scheme. At our February meeting, members heard that while most organisations have already joined the scheme there is work underway to encourage other Queensland non-government institutions to join.

Children's Rights and Voices Project, *Review of the Child Protection Act 1999*

Members were provided with an update of the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women's consultation as part of the review of the *Child Protection Act 1999*, and given information regarding themes and considerations stemming from the consultation period.

The consultation report can be found at: <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/child-family-reform/child-protection-legislation-reform>

National Indigenous Youth Empowerment Summit

At the end of February, Mr Bob Atkinson and Mrs Joan Isaacs from the Taskforce will be travelling to Cairns to present on the Royal Commission and the work of the Taskforce at the National Indigenous Youth Empowerment Summit. It is expected that over 150 people will be in attendance, and it is hoped that this presentation will help build a network of contacts for the Taskforce forum to be held in Cairns in June.

Toowoomba Forum

Final preparations are underway for the first public forum by the Taskforce, being held in Toowoomba on 13 February 2020. The Forum will provide service providers, people with lived experience and their supporters with an overview of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and a session from knowmore Legal Service on the National Redress Scheme. Breakout sessions will also be held in the afternoon as an opportunity for questions and for members of the Taskforce to be available to meet with people with lived experience.

Forums for 2020

The Taskforce have planned a number of forums across Queensland for this year. An outline of when and where these forums will be held will be available on our website in coming weeks. Two forums have already been scheduled for April – Rockhampton and Gympie. For more information please contact taskforce.secretariat@csyw.qld.gov.au