

NSW and Vic Governments back national redress while SA digs in deeper against the scheme; and the cost of the crisis to the US Catholic Church

The South Australian Government continues to stand out from all states in its opposition to a national redress scheme for the survivors of child sexual abuse, despite [the NSW and Victorian Governments](#) now on the record supporting the plan.

This week ABC Online reports that South Australian Premier Jay Weatherill thinks it is "...a bit rich to be asked to fund a second scheme once we've funded the first scheme."

The South Australian redress scheme has paid out just under \$1.2 million to 85 survivors abused in state-run facilities – an average of just \$14,100 per payment.

The huge problem with this is that the Royal Commission has estimated that there are in the order of 1,150 survivors of South Australian state-based abuse who are, under the Commission's proposal, entitled to some \$67 million over ten years.

Premier Weatherill said he would not be committing any state funding to a national scheme but would support a fully funded one.

On the basis of this it is clear Premier Weatherill supports the idea of survivors abused in South Australian State Government care receiving more redress but he wants the rest of the country to pay for it, not his government.

Premier Weatherill stands alone as the leader of a major institution – the South Australian Government – demanding that the rest of the country should be paying for abuse perpetrated in his State by South Australian state-based institutions.

If any other leader from any other institution be it a church, a school, a swimming association or a yoga centre were to take the same position they would be roundly, and rightly, condemned.

How it is that Premier Weatherill thinks this is a reasonable position, I'm sure is beyond the thinking of most people.

This week the National Catholic Reporter in the US has reported on the publication of research by Jack Ruhl and Diane Ruhl, which has put a \$3.99 billion cost so far of the child sexual abuse crisis in the US Catholic Church. The researchers call their numbers "solid" but also "a very conservative estimate."

In Australia the Royal Commission data suggests that over the coming ten years the Catholic Church is liable for somewhere between \$800 million and \$1 billion in additional redress payments. This is on top of some \$200 million that's already been paid out.

In an editorial on the research the National Catholic Reporter says:

The church has burned through \$3.99 billion since this crisis began. That money will never be replaced. The institutional church has made great strides in recent years in stemming the incidents of sexual abuse by its clergy. The next step is to rebuild the trust of its people. A major step in that regard is working toward complete financial transparency at the diocesan level.

This is just as applicable here as it is in the US.

Francis Sullivan
CEO Truth Justice and Healing Council
6 November, 2015