

THE AUSTRALIAN

Door opens for abuse survivors to sue perpetrators

SARAH ELKS, SARAH VOGLER THE AUSTRALIAN 12:00AM August 2, 2016

Survivors of institutional child sexual abuse in Queensland will be able to sue their abusers at any time, under new legislation to be introduced to the state's parliament this month.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk is expected to announce today that the government will move to lift the statute of limitations for civil claims, following a recommendation by the child sex abuse royal commission.

The proposal is likely to have bipartisan support, after the Liberal National Party last month announced the same policy.

Currently in Queensland, survivors have just three years after they turn 18 to lodge a claim against their alleged abuser, or three years after the alleged abuse occurs.

In December Ms Palaszczuk met with the Brisbane Grammar Network, a group of former students of the elite private school who would be blocked from seeking redress unless the statute of limitations is changed.

Lawyers, survivors and their advocates have been pushing for this reform for years. The law is different in all states and territories, but in all jurisdictions defendants can waive the time limit or judges can grant an extension.

Shine Lawyers Brisbane partner Lisa Flynn said the statute of limitations created an unfair situation where survivors were denied justice.