



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Child Sexual Abuse

QUESTION

Tuesday, 7 February 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner Shorten, Bill, MP
Speaker

Source House
Proof Yes
Responder Turnbull, Malcolm, MP
Question No.

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Mr SHORTEN (Maribyrnong—Leader of the Opposition) (14:29): My question is to the Prime Minister. Australians have been shocked and sickened by the crimes that have been revealed through the royal commission into child sexual abuse, including yesterday's tragic and indefensible revelations. Will the Prime Minister join with me in reassuring the people of Australia that we will do everything in our power together to make sure that this never happens again and that survivors get the justice and redress they deserve?

Mr TURNBULL (Wentworth—Prime Minister) (14:29): I can assure the honourable member that we are all committed to ensuring that redress is provided to the survivors of child sexual abuse by the responsible institutions. As the honourable member will be aware, we have announced a Commonwealth redress scheme for survivors of child sexual abuse in Commonwealth institutional settings. The scheme will be established by next year, 2018. It will comprise a monetary payment, psychological counselling and a direct personal response to acknowledge the wrongdoing inflicted upon survivors.

We are inviting the states, territories and other non-government institutions to join in the Commonwealth scheme to deliver redress. This announcement has been widely welcomed by survivor groups, institutions and states. We encourage all institutions, as I said, to participate in this. We call on the opposition to support the Commonwealth scheme. In 2009, honourable members will remember the apology to forgotten Australians had bipartisan support, and we would encourage the Labor Party on this occasion to throw their support behind our scheme.

This is a national shame, as the honourable member described it. Redress is available. We have set up a scheme that will do that, but the most critical thing that all of us must remember is that this type of abuse—this abuse—in any context, can never happen again. This is not just a history lesson; this is not just a sad tale from times past. This is a reminder to all of us today, in every part of the nation, to protect the vulnerable in our care—the children in our care—in whatever context.