

Media Release

Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Wednesday, 19 June 2024

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO BEAUMARIS BOARD OF INQUIRY

The Victorian Government is making sure the voices of all victim-survivors of historical abuse in government schools are heard, that their experiences are reflected on the public record and that they are supported to heal.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Education Minister Ben Carroll today announced the Government will accept all nine recommendations of the Board of Inquiry into historical child sexual abuse at Beaumaris Primary School and certain other government schools, in full or in principle – supported by an investment of \$48.29 million.

The Inquiry heard that, while the Beaumaris cluster of abuse was particularly insidious, it was not isolated – which is why the Government will establish a statewide independent truth-telling process, to hear the experiences of victim-survivors of historical sexual abuse at all government schools prior to 2000.

The Board of Inquiry demonstrated the immense value in truth-telling as a way for victim-survivors to be heard and validated, helping to contribute to individual and collective healing.

The Government will also undertake a review of how historical child sexual abuse matters were treated and responded to across the government school system over the same period, overseen by an Independent Monitor.

At the completion of both these processes in 2026, the Labor Government will publish a public record of these findings and deliver a formal apology in Parliament, in consultation with victim-survivors.

Alongside this work, the Government will create a memorial, acknowledging the historical child sexual abuse that occurred at Beaumaris Primary School. The memorial will be designed with victim-survivors, ensuring it is an enduring and reflective response to their experiences.

The Government will also improve information access for victim-survivors, including individualised support for people seeking records, better record management and trauma-informed practices for staff responding to requests.

To address the unique challenges that victim-survivors of child sexual abuse may face in accessing help, the Government will pilot a coordination, navigation, and advocacy function, providing wrap-around support and practical advocacy, access to flexible funds and assistance to navigate multiple service systems.

The Government will create a dedicated website and telephone line to provide information and assistance for victim-survivors of child sexual abuse in government schools.

The Government will also look at options to amend legislation to ensure the enduring protection of personal information under the *Inquiries Act 2014*, alongside work in response to recommendations made by the Yoorrook Justice Commission.

An additional \$17.6 million will further strengthen child safety investigation teams and resources, building on our already robust child safety protections – the result of a range of significant reforms over the past decade following the *Betrayal of Trust inquiry* and the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*.

The Government's response to the Inquiry can be viewed in full at vic.gov.au/inquiry-historical-abuse-beaumaris-primary-school.

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Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

“What should have been a happy place became a place of horror for these victim-survivors.”

“We can never undo the damage that was done, but we can help people heal by telling the truth – and making sure this never happens again.”

Quote attributable to Deputy Premier and Minister for Education Ben Carroll

“Victim-survivors have carried the grief and trauma they experienced at school for more than five decades. We are making sure the voices and experiences of all victim-survivors of abuse in government schools are heard and reflected on the public record.”

Quote attributable to Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Vicki Ward

“Making sure that the lived experience of victim-survivors is at the center of everything we do is essential. The pilot program for adult victim-survivors of institutional child sexual abuse will provide tailored support to help overcome the unique barriers we know they face.”