



Redress WA

No: 3 February 2010

Newsletter

Ex-gratia payment offers start this week

Since coming to Government in 2008, the State Government has been focused on delivering a fair scheme for applicants with a total allocated budget of \$114 million, of which \$90.2 million was set aside for ex-gratia payments alone.

From this allocated budget, a minimum ex-gratia payment of \$5,000 will be paid to all eligible applicants, with a maximum ex-gratia payment of \$45,000.

This week, the Minister for Community Services Robyn McSweeney announced the start of ex-gratia payment offers to Redress WA applicants. The first round of offers will focus on applicants who have already received an Interim Payment because they have advised Redress WA they have a life threatening illness or condition.

Redress WA will be making ex-gratia payment offers on a regular basis to all eligible applicants until mid 2011. Approximately 100 applications will be randomly selected at a time for assessment.

You are encouraged to check with Redress WA that your application is fully completed, as only completed applications can be assessed and processed for an ex-gratia payment offer.

Throughout this process, Redress WA will not be asking you to undertake any psychological or medical assessments to support your application, nor sign a Deed of Settlement (commonly known as a waiver) when you accept your ex-gratia payment offer.

It is important that if your health changes during this time where you have a life threatening illness or condition that can be confirmed by a medical report, you advise Redress WA, as you may be eligible to receive an Interim Payment and have your application assessed as a priority.

State Government formal apology to applicants

Following the acceptance of an ex-gratia payment offer, you will receive a formal letter of apology from the Premier Colin Barnett and Minister for Community Services Robyn McSweeney.

This letter is an acknowledgement by the State Government of the impact any abuse or neglect you experienced in State care had on your life.

Many applicants have told Redress WA this formal acknowledgement is an extremely important part of the healing process and will assist them in being able to move forward with their lives.



Eligibility for the Redress WA scheme

In order for you to receive an ex-gratia payment, Redress WA must verify that your application meets all the eligibility criteria established for the scheme.

To be eligible for an ex-gratia payment, you must have been:

- in State Care in Western Australia before 1 March 2006 (this includes child migrants and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who were placed in State care),
- aged 18 years and over on the 30 April 2009, and
- detail in your application the abuse and/or neglect you experienced while in State care.

Applicants do not meet the eligibility criteria for an ex-gratia payment if they experienced abuse and or neglect:

- while in a subsidised guardianship arrangement where there was no State supervision
- while with persons receiving private foster carer subsidies for a defined period of time where there was no State supervision, or
- after an adoption order was completed (ie after being adopted).

You can contact the Redress WA helpdesk on 1800 617 233 if you need the criteria further explained or if you have any questions about your application or eligibility to the scheme.

Do you have additional or missing information to add to your application?

Redress WA will contact you to finalise your application when it is being assessed. In the meantime if you wish to provide Redress WA with additional information that can further support your claim, please send it to **Locked Bag 6, West Perth WA 6872.**

Please be advised that the service providers who supported people to complete their applications are no longer funded to respond to general enquiries, so please direct all enquiries to Redress WA.

Payment levels and assessment scale explained

Schemes such as Redress WA are required to establish a clear set of assessment criteria that guide how individual applications are assessed.

The information you provide in your application about the abuse and/or neglect you experienced while in State care will be assessed using the set criteria and will determine the level of ex-gratia payment you will be offered.

The four broad levels of abuse and/or neglect and ex-gratia payment amounts that have been set by Redress WA are as follows;

Moderate abuse and/or neglect suffered	\$5,000
Serious abuse and/or neglect suffered with some ongoing symptoms and disability	\$13,000
Severe abuse and/or neglect suffered with ongoing symptoms and disability	\$28,000
Very severe abuse and/or neglect suffered with ongoing symptoms and disability	\$45,000

Early assessment shows that approximately half of all claims of abuse and/or neglect detailed by applicants fall into the moderate to serious abuse category as described above.

In cases where an applicant has already received an Interim Payment, the amount they have received will be subtracted from their final ex-gratia payment offer.

Your grounds for appeal

Should you wish to appeal your ex-gratia payment offer, you must be able to demonstrate that Redress WA made an error of fact or did not follow its guidelines for the scheme. If you believe this is probable in your case, please call the Redress WA information line on 1800 617 233 and request to have the process of your final assessment reviewed in accordance with the complaints process in the Redress WA Guidelines. If you are not satisfied with this outcome, you can then seek a review by the Ombudsman.

Assessment, offer and ex-gratia payment process explained

There are three key steps involved in offering you an ex-gratia payment. This includes assessing your completed application, writing to you with an ex-gratia payment offer when your application has been assessed and finally, paying you your ex-gratia payment.

Step 1 - Assessment

The first step in assessing your application is for Redress WA to check that your application meets the eligibility criteria set out for the scheme and to verify your time in WA State care.

Redress WA will contact you or your nominated representative when your application and any records relating to your time in State care are due for assessment. This is to give you a final opportunity to add or clarify any details to further support your claim. Once this is finalised your application will be assessed against the set criteria outlined earlier, to determine the amount of ex-gratia payment you will be offered.

Step 2 - Offer

Redress WA will write to you or your nominated representative when your application has been assessed and make you an ex-gratia payment offer. To receive your ex-gratia payment, you will need to complete, sign and return the 'Payment Acceptance' and 'Bank Account Details' form included with your letter within 28 days of the offer being made.

Step 3 - Payment

Once Redress WA receives your completed 'Payment Acceptance' form, we will deposit your ex-gratia payment into your nominated bank account.

Complete applications assessed first

Initial checks of applications show that almost 40 per cent of all applications have not been fully completed so that they can be assessed. Approximately 100 applications at a time will be randomly selected for processing.

To be assessed for an ex-gratia payment offer, your application must:

- have been signed
- include information under the "Statement of abuse or neglect"
- include verified ID, and
- verify your current name, if it has changed since being in State care.

When your application is selected for assessment, Redress WA will contact you to give you the opportunity to add or clarify any details to further support your claim.

If you think you did not include some of the required information with your application, or have more information to support your application, contact the Redress WA helpdesk on 1800 617 233 [charges apply from mobiles] or (08) 6217 8720.



How can I get urgent help?

If you need help urgently, we recommend you:

- Speak to your doctor (GP or psychiatrist),
- Call Lifeline on 13 11 14 (24 hours),
- Call Crisis Care on 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008 (24 hours), or
- Call Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636 (24 hours).

Have you moved house or have a new contact number?

If your circumstances have changed it is important to tell Redress WA so your details can be updated. Please call us on free call 1800 617 233 [charges apply from mobiles] or (08) 6217 8720 [standard call charges apply] to do this.

Financial Counselling

A useful service that some Redress WA applicants may wish to access when they receive their ex-gratia payment is Centrelink's Financial Information Service.

Centrelink's Financial Information Service (FIS) is an education and information service available to everyone in the community. FIS helps people to

make informed decisions about financial issues for their current and future financial needs.

FIS is independent, free and confidential and provides services through seminars and by phone and appointment. To contact the Financial Information Service or find out more, call 13 6357 between 8am to 5pm (AEST) or visit www.centrelink.gov.au

Contact Redress WA

Office hours: 9.00 – 4.30pm, Monday – Friday

Freecall: 1800 617 233 (charges apply from mobiles)

Telephone: 61 8 6217 8720 (standard call charges apply)

Email: info@redress.wa.gov.au

Post: Locked Bag 6, WEST PERTH WA 6872

Website: www.redress.wa.gov.au
