

## Local and Holistic Support for Survivors

### 12.1 Introduction

Survivors need support when preparing and submitting redress applications; they need help through (often protracted) assessment processes, assistance when they receive payments, and afterwards. Large numbers of survivors will have 'low levels of education and varying literacy skills, high levels of mental health issues and a reduced capacity to cope with delays and frustrations' (Western Australian Department for Communities (c2012): 3). The resulting difficulties make good support necessary to survivors and to the effectiveness of any redress programme. Support work is not ancillary, it is part of redress.

The chapter moves through two phases. I first explore how local, often long-standing, community agencies support survivors. This discussion encompasses the roles of survivors and offenders in providing support. I then look at four key professional services: legal advice, records access, psychological counselling, and financial advice. This chapter stresses the advantages of providing holistic support through, or alongside, community agencies. While survivors should have real choices where they get support, comprehensive services that embed professional support in local agencies reduce access barriers and help ensure that support does not stop after the payment is accepted or the redress programme ends.

### 12.2 Community Agencies

I begin by looking at what community agencies do well and some of the difficulties they confront. Community agencies are a diverse bunch, as are the roles they undertake in redress. Some provide specific services, such as counselling, while others are more comprehensive. Many agencies are small and informal; others are large professional organisations, and there are those that blend informal and formal components. All are constantly evolving.

The distrust that many survivors have for government accentuates the need for trusted community agencies to participate in delivering redress effectively. Chapter 5 described Lotus Place's work as the shop front for Queensland Redress. Lotus Place is a characteristically informal community centre located in Brisbane. Like many such agencies, it offers survivors a place where they can be at home. Many survivors need regular assistance. Agency staff develop long-standing relationships with survivors who come in to have (or make) a meal or read a book (AU Interview 17). Personal relationships are an important aspect of community agencies. Survivors get to know agency staff, forming supportive friendships.

Because they are trusted presences in the community, local agencies can help survivors surmount the barriers they confront in getting redress (Audit and Assurance Services Branch 2015: 14; Reimer et al. 2010: 65; National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation 2020: 15). During Queensland Redress, Lotus Place provided

practical assistance in completing applications for the Redress Scheme and preparing declarations of harm, advocacy with past residential care providers, individual counselling for people adversely affected by trauma and childhood abuse, therapeutic group activities, opportunities for reconnection with family and friends, drop-in activities, literacy and numeracy courses and access to those, advocacy and referral for people at risk of homelessness in crisis or with mental health issues, advocacy with government and peer support activities . . . (Mark Francis in 'Official Committee Hansard' 2009a: CA72)

At Lotus Place, survivors would get help accessing their personal records and be guided through the application process. They could also be put in touch with counsellors. And, most importantly, that process happened within a holistic focus on the survivor's well-being. The survivor would have a case worker help them through the redress process, but that was only part of the agency's work with survivors, together with helping survivors to get a job, housing, or medical treatment. This model, in which redress is part of a larger relationship enables services to continue after the redress programme ends. The capacity to offer holistic and long-term services, as opposed to short-term support that is narrowly focussed on redress, is a critical point of advantage for community agencies. For those reasons, policymakers should consider offering redress applicants the opportunity to register with a community agency, enabling support to continue long term.

Eris Harrison, speaking for the advocacy group Alliance for Forgotten Australians, argues that Queensland Redress's high application numbers resulted from the effective work of community agencies (Senate Community Affairs References Committee 2009: 39). Queensland's approach stands out: for many survivors, Lotus Place was a 'lifesaver' (RPR Consulting c2011: 7). But redress programmes also create challenges for these agencies because they increase the number of survivors they work with, while changing the work that they do (Evaluation, Performance Measurement, and Review Branch: Audit and Evaluation Sector 2009: 36). In Perth, Tuart Place's client numbers grew from 500 to 1,400 during the two years of Redress WA (AU Interview 6), while, at the same time, agency staff had to learn how best to support applicants in a new (to everyone) redress programme. Queensland Redress similarly increased the numbers of survivors using Lotus Place. Robyn Eltherington notes that the resulting changes were

a challenge for former residents who have been engaged in our service system for a long time; Lotus Place had become home, in a sense, and had been predictable, and they felt it was their place. I think that for them – I do not mean to speak for everyone, but this is just my perception – [Queensland Redress] has been a significant change . . . we need to work with them to talk about what we can learn from that and what we need now that there so many more people who have connected. ('Official Committee Hansard' 2009a: CA75)

Because they are flexible and responsive, community agencies can quickly reorient themselves to support survivors' needs. But there are other forces at work. Tendering service contracts selects organisations that can compete for funding successfully, a process that has clear disciplinary effects (Green 2016: 164). Where existing organisations are robust, programmes can use them as assets. Other agencies will evolve to become more successful in getting funding. Across all the exemplar cases, redress programmes encouraged the rapid growth and professionalisation of service agencies. States can aid that process by investing in community agencies. For example, prior to the 2018 advent of the Shaw Commission, support services in New Zealand were inferior to those in other jurisdictions. New Zealand has since begun funding certain agencies to develop, including Male Survivors Aotearoa, which received more than NZD\$12 million to upgrade its national capacity (Male Survivors Aotearoa 2020). That is a considerable sum for an organisation that was once a coffee-and-muffin peer support group meeting in a Christchurch community hall (NZ Interview 1).

The personal service provided by community agencies is critical to their effectiveness. But it also creates privacy challenges. Many survivors will not want their family, friends, or associates knowing about their redress application. But the intimate environment of a community agency can make confidentiality difficult. In small communities, 'even the location of office space might compromise a Survivor's privacy' (Reimer et al. 2010: 71). In response, Canadian agencies developed privacy-preserving techniques, including home visits. The demands of privacy also underscore the survivors' need to have multiple points of access to the redress programme. One-stop local services are an important asset, but they need to be augmented by accessible centralised assistance. Local support favours those who live in the right area. Most survivors will not be so fortunate. The widely praised Lotus Place helped 20 per cent of Queensland Redress applicants – a modest minority. Technology is making remote support ever-more accessible; however, it remains impersonal. Programmes should consider using itinerant in-person services to reach survivors in more remote locations. In short, the answer is to provide options and enable survivors to select those services best suited to them.

Redress programmes benefit from better quality applications that cost less to administer and are quicker to assess. To help survivors submit better applications, support workers need to 'understand exactly what information is required from the applicant and how that information should be formatted' (Western Australian Department for Communities c2012: 14). That knowledge can develop through experience and training. Canada's IAP offers a good practice model. There, programme staff visited small communities to engage and train support workers, who could then champion the programme to survivors and help them through the application process. These workers were salaried contractors. By contrast, Redress WA contracted community agencies to provide a specified number of hours of assistance for each applicant (no training was provided) (Green et al. 2013: 4). Alternatively, if service providers are block-funded *ex ante* to assist people with applications, they will be able to train staff appropriately and use their more secure funding to provide holistic support.

By raising the political profile of survivors' claims, redress programmes can help community services get needed funding. Conversely, survivors who come to local agencies for help with a redress application will be introduced to the agency's broader services and community, potentially beginning long-term beneficial relationships. Redress programmes can

thereby play important roles in connecting survivors with services and in developing the quality and reach of these services. Good support services are critical to survivors' well-being. Many ageing care leavers are concerned about the prospect of being reinstitutionalised in residential care homes and hospitals (Browne-Yung et al. 2021). As nodes in overlapping networks of survivors, community agencies can provide critical support for survivors and advocacy on their behalf.

I will close by addressing a general worry. I support block-funding agencies that deliver holistic and comprehensive services. That advocacy appears at odds with the fashionable thinking in policy circles known as new public management (Lane 2002). Many analysts believe that because block funding lacks incentives linked to individual clients, it leads to lower-quality services. They believe it is better to have market competition that enables users to select providers who best meet their needs (Lapiente and Van de Walle 2020: 464). As competition develops better services, it drives specialisation, with providers filling ever-more refined niches in a market serving ever-more sophisticated consumers. That may work in some fields. But that argument depends on a problematic set of assumptions. Most survivors only make one application for redress. That means that they do not benefit from opportunities to try out different service providers. As the Canadian experience with legal professionals (discussed below) demonstrates, one-off service fees can have perverse effects when there is no chance of the user becoming a repeat customer. While survivors need to be able to choose services that are accessible to them, the time-limited character of most redress programmes reduces the opportunities for markets to develop among the (often very few) existing service providers. Service agencies need to be monitored for quality and to prevent corruption. They need to be accountable to survivors and to the broader public. But in a field where survivors face steep access barriers, I think the evidence supports stable and robust funding for holistic, comprehensive, and ethically driven agencies.

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Every time I visited a support agency or group, I heard about the importance of survivors working with other survivors. For example, in Australia, a support worker told me,

There is nothing like a survivor coming into a drop-in centre for the first time and the first person who comes up to meet him and welcome him in, kind of in an official way, is also a survivor. There is an immediate

connection, often of that shared experience, that a professional person who isn't a survivor of abuse can't have with that person and that is empowering. It is an overused word – 'empowering' – but there is something important about that. (AU Interview 6)

An Irish interviewee said,

You see it yourself, the difference [when a survivor is] speaking to [another survivor] that they divulge so much so quickly. Right? Whereas if it's somebody different it takes a while because it's a trust thing. It's all on trust. (IR Interview 9)

Similar points were made at each of the eleven local agencies in which I conducted interviews. Survivors occupy leading roles in many of these agencies. As credible representatives, their leadership brings the authority of lived experience. Moreover, their presence can help overcome mistrust. Working to support one another through redress helps survivors build and maintain communities in which they feel at home. As the New Zealand survivor Jim Goodwin notes, 'Abuse happens in isolation, healing happens in communities' (Quoted in, *The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State and Faith-Based Care 2021: 302*). Survivors can grow into effective support workers by volunteering at an agency where they have personal contacts and feel comfortable. Survivors describe their work supporting other survivors as important to their personal development, gaining experience and self-respect from their accomplishments, while providing local agencies with dedicated staff who are connected to the work they do and the people they work with (IR Interview 9; NZ Interview 1; AU Interview 1; AU Interview 15).

Being involved in supporting one another is an important way survivors can participate in redress. But interviewees emphasised the challenges it creates, including privacy concerns. Some people, of course, make their identity as survivors publicly known. But no one should need to publicise their injurious experiences to get a job – most organisations would confront serious legal and ethical challenges should they make victimhood a condition of employment. And survivors have different capacities. While observers emphasise the contributions made by those who are 'more articulate and resilient' (Ministry of Social Development 2018c: 21), interviewees often highlighted problems. The psychological difficulties that many survivors experience can make it hard for them to work in an organisation (AU Interview 17). And more concretely, many survivors have problems with literacy and other technical skills that make it difficult for them to serve on a board or make administrative decisions

(AU Interview 6). While that interviewee argued survivor-leadership was, on balance, an undoubted and crucial asset,

it can feel a bit sometimes like it is the professional [non-survivor] board members at a board meeting who are grappling with the 'real' decisions ... there can be a sense at times of [that] it's the professional board members who make nuts and bolts decisions about money and that kind of thing. (AU Interview 6)

As previously mentioned, conflict of interest problems occurred in Ireland, where survivors on the Board of Caranua helped decide the criteria for disbursing benefits and then made applications for those benefits themselves (IR Interview 4). Similar problems occurred at a programme in Melbourne (Frederico and Long 2013: 90). Another agency said that when they

employed one person because they were a Forgotten Australian [a survivor]. She applied for a job, she had the skills and had been in an orphanage. But it was a disaster because the more she got into the work, the more she over-identified, and then she thought she had more life experience to make decisions about who should get money and should not, and all of that. (AU Interview 1)

Other problems concern evidence. Survivors risk contaminating each other's testimony, creating potential problems when one survivor helps another compile a redress application. And where past trauma has led to psychological damage, survivors may not be able to help others. Two Australian interviewees reported issues with sex-offending survivors creating risks for others at their agencies (AU Interviews 6; AU Interview 10). Having learned from past difficulties, one Canadian agency requires survivors to be actively pursuing psychological well-being as a condition of employment (CA Interview 2). More generally, survivor participation can risk aggravating injuries. Psychological support needs to secure well-being, but some formats, such as group sessions, can be harmful if not well-managed (AU Interview 10; AU Interview 17). I have participated in several group sessions that exploded emotionally, with survivors threatening and insulting each other.

As a last comment, redress programmes and associated support agencies must beware that some people become professional victim advocates, while others operate as professional victims (AU Interview 7). 'Activities and groups that serve to strengthen victim identities and communities can sometimes lock people into the past' (Huysse 2003: 63) when survivors would be better helped to move beyond their injury. Numerous

interviewees spoke off the record about difficulties with survivor advocates. Some advocates use survivors as stepping stones for a career. Others exploit them. And, as I have noted previously, the views expressed by survivor representatives may not be very representative at all. There was conflict between survivor's representatives (and potential support agencies run by survivors) over service contracts in Australia, while survivors jostled for remunerative positions with Ireland's Caranua. These concerns reflect the usual effects of inducement and bias. Still, while survivors supporting survivors poses challenges, most interviewees stressed that these difficulties were manageable through good hiring processes and managerial support.

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When offending agencies take leading roles in providing redress, some survivors will see the difficulties they experience during the process as further institutional offending. I have observed that because the state is an offender, a state redress programme can confront survivors as an offending institution. Equally, redress programmes can need offending NGOs, such as churches, to participate by providing funding, documentary evidence, or witness testimony. Having discussed these roles previously, here, I want to look at the support roles that offending NGOs can undertake.

Offending NGOs often want to support survivors to make amends and rehabilitate themselves as organisations. Massimo Faggioli, a historian of the Catholic Church, argues that continuing revelations of systemic sex abuse comprise 'the most serious crisis in the Catholic Church since the Protestant Reformation' (Faggioli 2018). Embracing several Christian denominations, the crisis targets the churches' moral authority and their financial health (Boorstein and Bailey 2019), which means their institutional well-being may depend on being seen to repent. And offending NGOs offer more than motivation. As long-standing service providers, many offending NGOs have useful experience, skills, infrastructure, and client networks. Having offending NGOs involved can be valuable to survivors. After all, these organisations ran the institutions, and it was their priests and employees who inflicted injuries and abuse. Survivors who want to hold them accountable may welcome their participation in redress.

Offender participation can happen in different ways. In a holistic manner, many churches have offered general apologies, sought to reform



their organisations, and invited survivors to (re)join them in fellowship. More immediately, offending NGOs can take up roles in redress. In Ireland's RIRB and Canada's IRSSA, the churches part-funded redress payments. Canadian survivors could also ask church officials to attend IAP hearings to offer a personal acknowledgement or apology. Although only a minority did, their contributions could be a 'really powerful thing in terms of individual reconciliation' (CA Interview 4). The IAP's final report emphasises the value that churches brought to the process (Independent Assessment Process Oversight Committee 2021: 70). Equally, in Western Australia, I was told that

[The Salvation Army] do it really well, they send along their Territorial Commander and he sits there, and he listens for as long as necessary and he says, 'I'm really, really sorry' and he is the top guy and for people who have been through a Salvation Army home who know the hierarchy, that is impressive. They feel validated. They feel like they have been taken seriously. (AU Interview 6)

For survivors who are ready and when the NGOs do it well, having offending institutions participate can be advantageous (White 2014: 3). But it is critical that they participate only when invited. Some survivors feel 'so much anger and rage' that they cannot bear to work with past providers (AU Interview 13). The Magdalene laundries programme required survivors to approach the religious orders that ran the laundries to get their records. That provision likely deterred survivors who feared conflicts of interest and retraumatisation or who simply did not want to contact an offending religious order. A survivor-centred approach might adopt a two-pronged strategy. The first prong involves offending organisations funding independent agencies to work at arm's-length. Support agencies must be clearly autonomous – that means funding needs to be long term and unconditional and staffing appointments must be made independently. The exemplar programmes include good examples. Lotus Place is an independent branch of Micah Projects, a Catholic initiative, while in Western Australia, Christian Brothers Ex-Residents Services was an early and important advocate for Redress WA. Christian Brothers Ex-Residents Services was succeeded by Tuart Place, which continues as an independent community agency.<sup>1</sup> In the second prong, organisations can

<sup>1</sup> Tuart Place is operationally independent. Although it receives some funding from Catholic institutions and operates out of Catholic-owned premises, it has other funding sources and clear governmental independence. The relationship of Lotus Place to the Catholic Church is best summarised as complicated (see Micah Projects Inc. 2020).

engage with those survivors who want direct contact, for example, the Irish Catholic Church runs a survivor counselling service, Towards Healing, that has worked with nearly 7,000 survivors and family members since 1997 (Towards Healing Counselling and Support Services 2020: 5). Best practice involves developing trauma-informed specialist agencies that adopt a survivor-focussed ethos.

### 12.3 Professional Services

This section focuses on the supportive work of lawyers, archivists, counsellors, and financial advice services. The quality of that support, and how it is organised and funded, shapes the survivor's experience of redress. It also affects programme operations. Embedding these services within local community organisations makes them easier to access and more effective.

In litigation, plaintiffs pay their own lawyers. New Zealand's HCP largely continued that model, as did Redress WA and Queensland Redress. When survivors need to pay for their own lawyers, most go through redress without legal support. This can be fine for some applicants in relatively simple programmes. But more complex programmes demand significant legal assistance, creating opportunities for problems. The most complex exemplar programmes, Canada's IAP and Ireland's RIRB, confronted widespread difficulties with legal professionals. Public scandal over legal costs damaged the RIRB's reputation (Kelly 2006) while frustration with the legal malpractice led the IAP's Dan Ish to complain,

When I accepted the appointment as Chief Adjudicator in 2007, I never anticipated that my duties would include regulating the lawyers who appear for claimants. I have, however, come to the conclusion that such a role is necessary in order to preserve the integrity of the IAP – a process that is meant to be claimant-centered and ought never to do further harm to those who suffered abuse at residential schools. (Indian Residential Schools Adjudication Secretariat 2012: 4)

Ish's frustration was precipitated by an epidemic of malpractice affecting thousands of claimants (Coughlan and Thompson 2018: 24). The RIRB and IAP attracted lawyers who were previously uninvolved in historic abuse claims. Some joined to help vulnerable clients navigate a difficult process. Others saw opportunities to exploit those vulnerabilities. Putting gross malpractice aside (for a moment), a programme's structure can

create perverse incentives. Ireland's RIRB would only defray the survivor's legal costs if the survivor accepted a settlement. A survivor who rejected the RIRB's offer would become responsible for their legal costs – a noteworthy incentive. However, if the deep-pocketed state guarantees their fees, lawyers can increase their billable hours by increasing the amount of information they process for each case, creating delays. Similarly, increasing fees in tandem with the survivor's redress payment can encourage lawyers to extract retraumatising information from unprepared survivors (Pembroke 2019: 52; National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation 2020: 40; CA Interview 7). Other lawyers can maximise returns by doing very little for large numbers of claimants. One Irish survivor named 'Robert' said, 'I felt like I was just a number to my solicitor, and I was! I was one of hundreds of other survivors they were representing at the same time!' (Quoted in, Pembroke 2019: 52). In Canada, 'form fillers' completed thousands of applications while offering minimal support to each applicant, with lawyers secure in the knowledge that high success rates would guarantee large numbers of fee-paying claims (Petoukhov 2018: 87). Gross malpractice occurred when lawyers cheated and exploited thousands of vulnerable care leavers.

Even when lawyers behave ethically, legal representation risks aggravating a redress programme's adversarial potential (White 2014: 4). Lawyers who focus on getting the largest possible monetary settlement can obstruct other benefits, perhaps, most importantly, the survivors' sense that they have been heard and had their experiences validated. A ministerial report in New Zealand (the potential bias of which should be strongly underlined) observes that

[legally] represented Claimants were more critical, frustrated and dissatisfied with the process. We believe this is in part attributable to the arm's length approach inevitable in a represented claim scenario ... The Claimants felt uninformed and isolated from the process and were left with a *fait accompli* – accept the offer or wait a few more years. (Ministry of Social Development 2018c: 9)

While there is some evidence that legally supported applicants receive higher payments (Kruk 2021: 42; NZ Interview 2), legal representatives increase the risk of instrumentalisation, wherein redress becomes valuable to the survivor only in terms of its monetary outcome. Lawyers come with their own skills and perspectives. Used to the adversarial dynamic of litigation, they may not appreciate the different needs and purposes of redress. Danielle De Paoli, a solicitor who works with Australian survivors, argues that lawyers should subordinate their role as advocate to

that of membership in the survivors 'network of supporters' (De Paoli 2017: 57). The role of lawyer-in-support means attending to the entirety of the survivor's well-being (De Paoli 2017: 54).

A community law initiative in Australia offers a promising model for holistic practice. Originally developed to help survivors work with the McClellan Commission (2013–2017), knowmore was well-positioned to support applicants when the NRS began in 2018. Services are free to survivors because knowmore receives block funding from Australian governments. Block funding limits cost-building incentives: because knowmore staff are salaried (and not fee-for-service), they do not profit from individual claims. More importantly, knowmore trains legal professionals to work with survivors. That includes training in Indigenous cultures and workshops on trauma-informed practices (AU Interview 5). As a result, knowmore's lawyers are redress experts with a personal and professional ethos that prioritises the survivors' well-being. And, of course, knowmore's funding structure and ethos limits the prospect of gross malpractice.

Knowmore's holistic practice offers counselling and financial advice alongside legal services. It can be difficult to talk about injurious experiences with a lawyer. Some survivors will be difficult clients – they will miss meetings, fail to provide evidence, or have problems managing their emotions. Trauma-informed training can help lawyers learn how to get information from clients effectively in ways that make survivors feel safe and supported (AU Interview 10). At knowmore, lawyers and counsellors collaborate to promote survivor-focussed practice. And while knowmore's distinctive approach might not be replicable everywhere, it highlights the value of embedding lawyers in comprehensive community agencies. Still, the usual problems emerge. A review praising knowmore's work observed that resource limits were creating delays, with some survivors waiting up to twelve months for an initial consult, and there were difficulties with access outside metropolitan areas (Kruk 2021: 211). As I have previously said, to ensure fair access, local services need to be accompanied by initiatives that reach smaller and rural communities. Survivors should be able to choose and retain the legal counsel of their choice. However, because better legal representation is a key to better redress programmes, knowmore's holistic service is a model for how programmes can support survivors to access records, get psychological counselling, and receive financial advice.

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Turning to survivors' personal records, I have consistently noted how institutional records are often incomplete or missing. Moreover, survivors experience severe difficulties with accessing records, difficulties that archival professionals can help navigate. Getting access to records can be cumbersome, slow, and expensive and care leavers may be deterred by the need to contact offending organisations. (The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State and Faith-Based Care 2021: 252–53; AU Interview 4). Survivors may not trust offending organisations to release all the relevant information, they (the survivors) may have experienced their initial, or even repeated, requests for records being wrongfully denied (NZ Interview 8). Once they get their records, survivors may have difficulty understanding what they received. Problems with literacy combine with technical jargon. For example, one expert told me that Irish care records sometimes describe survivors as having been 'found receiving alms' as children (IR Interview 11). When they read their files, many survivors thought that meant that they were found begging on the streets. But that was not true – the phrase meant that children were with foster parents. Terminological difficulties are aggravated by derogatory or insulting language that increases the need for emotional support (Allen and Clarke Policy and Regulatory Specialists Limited 2018: 2). The result is that survivors need specialist assistance to acquire, understand, and use their records.

Exemplar programmes were frequently delayed when they could not access records or when records management systems were inadequate. Even comparatively simple schemes, like Ireland's Magdalene programme, found primary care records deficient, requiring innovative and broader archival searches or evidentiary interviews. To anticipate problems with delays in records-access, programmes need to enable survivors to submit applications with only minimal records, permitting them to augment their files as records become progressively available. In some cases these problems could have been mitigated by investing in, and testing, a records system prior to opening the redress programmes or by having the programme open to applications over a longer period. Archivists need time to discover what information is held where and to identify gaps or problems in that tapestry of information. But public officials confront a trade-off, any delay in the opening of the redress programme will attract public criticism and imposes further costs upon survivors.

To move forward, there are lessons to be drawn from Irish and Australian practice. Ireland did two things well. First, Ireland digitalised

relevant records before the redress programme began. This was a bit lucky – the initiative emerged in response to pressure from adoptees and care leavers for information about their birth families. However serendipitous, digitalisation helped the RIRB. Future redress programmes would similarly benefit, and, as Chapter 10 urges, any jurisdiction contemplating a redress programme should compile and digitise all care records as soon as possible. States should also review their file retention and destruction policies to ensure they do not dispose of relevant material and similarly encourage NGOs to follow best practice (for best practice guidance, see Department of Social Services 2015). The second thing the Irish did well was to use a competent service provider to assist survivors. As Chapter 4 describes, Origins staff were embedded in Barnardos community agencies across Ireland. With access to the state's digitised database, Origins staff became experts at locating relevant records for the RIRB and experienced in supporting survivors. Similar points might be made about the Find and Connect service in Australia ('Find & Connect' 2021). Initially launched in 2011, Find and Connect is a website that describes where records relevant to survivors are, what those records contain, and how people can access them. Find and Connect builds upon previous publications, including Queensland's *Missing Pieces* and Western Australia's *Signposts* (Queensland Department of Families 2001; Information Services 2004). The database is open access. At present, support workers around Australia are using Find and Connect to help NRS applicants. This includes state funding for Find and Connect staff in community agencies, such as Lotus Place. Note how, in both Ireland and Australia, archival staff operated out of community agencies that help survivors through the difficult process of accessing records.

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I have emphasised that redress processes harm applicants who must recall, relive, or even learn about their injurious experiences. To manage these difficulties, survivors need access to counselling throughout the programme, and after. Most programmes refer survivors to professional counselling services that they block fund or pay fees-for-services, authorising a pre-set amount of support. That counselling is often focussed on high-stress activities, such as evidentiary interviews. But that approach might not match the requirements of survivors whose needs are not episodic. Nor it is best practice for survivors to meet counselling staff

just before highly stressful events (IR Interview 6). It is better for survivors to develop a stable relationship with one or more counsellors throughout the redress process (AU Interview 17). Counselling must be accessible and provided for as long as it is needed. Appropriately responding to the survivors' complex and acute needs can involve community, family, and individual measures (Aboriginal Healing Foundation 2006: 12).

This study is not an account of good counselling practice (see instead Sanderson 2006; Cloitre, Cohen, and Koenen 2006). But among the exemplar programmes, Canada's comprehensive local support stands out. Leveraging the AFN's on-reserve infrastructure was part of a post-colonial drive to devolve delivery to Indigenous-run services (CA Interview 6). Canada funded cultural, emotional, and psychological support, combining mental health services with culturally appropriate and often local support for survivors that was integrated with existing public health services to avoid inefficient duplication. Involving the local community in providing emotional and psychological support is likely to help build survivors' trust in the programme (Dion Stout and Harp 2007: 53–55). When getting help is normalised, it loses its stigma. Moreover, a community-level strategy helps alleviate persistent problems associated with finding and retaining appropriate psychologists. As redress programmes increase the demands upon counselling professionals, alternative means of support can help reduce (often substantial) waiting times. In Canada, local cultural support and, to a lesser extent, health support workers offered accessible non-professional alternatives to psychologists. In all the exemplar jurisdictions, local community workers supported survivors going through redress. This could include getting them accommodation near the evidentiary interview, accompanying them to professional consultations and/or interviews, helping answer questions, and just being there for survivors going through a difficult time. When the experience of abuse is widespread in the community, it is important to have community-level responses (Degagné 2007: S53). In that respect, Canada's group-based redress practices enabled mutual support. Similarly, Australia's Lotus, Tuart, and Open Place, along with knowmore, combine counselling support with other survivor services.

I have been talking about counselling support for survivors through redress. Counselling can also be a redress outcome. Canada's IAP allowed survivors to apply for psychological care provisions as part of redress. Similarly, counselling is part of the NRS's redress package. These programmes give survivors the option of choosing counselling-as-redress,

creating flexibility. Survivors regularly report that counselling is one of the most important and regularly accessed services (Reimer et al. 2010: 67–73; Watson 2011: 4; Golding and Rupan 2011: 34). Block-funding specialised counselling services can be cheaper than paying survivors to find counselling on a case-by-case basis (Boyce and Wood 2010: 511–12). It can also be more accessible for survivors. Redress programmes can fund services embedded in local agencies, alongside more private telephone and video-calling services to make a flexible and holistic range of options available and provide services that are accessible to survivors in rural areas.

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My last topic in this chapter concerns managing money. Legally incapable survivors will need to have their money managed by third parties, as will those currently incarcerated. But financial management will be optional for most survivors. To help survivors manage their redress monies, redress programmes offer financial advice services. Similarly, most major redress reports endorse the value of financial advice, including, for example, the McClellan Commission (Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2015b: 379). Those recommendations reflect submissions made by agencies with significant experience working with survivors. The benefits of professional advice are clear. Many survivors combine poor literacy and numeracy with little experience in managing larger sums of money (Petoukhov 2018: 96; Reimer et al. 2010: 43). Marginalised survivors may not be able to find good advice within their communities, while their vulnerabilities to those who would exploit them create fears that survivors will misspend their redress monies (Dion Stout and Harp 2007: 33–34; Miller 2017: 169).<sup>2</sup> At the same time, redress payments can affect the survivor's eligibility for means-tested benefits. While most states mandate that redress does not count as ordinary income, the attendant complexities of law and regulation may not be easy to understand. Moreover, these complexities may not be known to officials in the government agencies that administer benefits. Officials who mistake redress payments for ordinary income may deprive survivors of entitlements. Survivors need to have someone to whom they can come to help resolve problems.

Unfortunately, these excellent reasons to offer financial advice do not reflect any evidence that most survivors benefit from it. In no exemplar

<sup>2</sup> Chapter 13 offers some reservations regarding these concerns.



case was financial planning widely used. For example, an Australian survey reports that only 10 per cent of 136 respondent survivors had financial counselling concerning their redress payment (Care Leavers Australia Network 2016: 21). Low uptake may stem from ignorance regarding financial counselling's benefits, fatigue resulting from protracted redress processes, and/or anxiety in relation to visiting an upscale office to meet a wealth professional. Simply offering financially counselling is not an effective way to make it accessible.

Dion Stout argues that accessible financial counselling needs to engage the survivor in determining what goals they have and then provide them with what they need to realise those goals (Dion Stout and Harp 2007: 71). Advice needs to be delivered by people who are used to working with survivors and provided in places where survivors feel comfortable. For Indigenous survivors, financial advice should reflect distinctive cultural values. Programmes can provide a helpline for survivors to call with questions or get general guidance. But a holistic agency like knowmore can link personalised financial advice with legal and counselling services. Survivors who come to talk to counsellors or their lawyers could be encouraged towards financial advice. Because most survivors will talk to their counsellors and lawyers on multiple occasions, that encouragement can be repeated. Moreover, being embedded in a community agency allows financial advisors to benefit from trauma-informed training and experience with survivors. Making financial advice part of everyday community services could be more helpful to more survivors. More generally, as I previously observed, future redress programmes could offer survivors the opportunity to register with a community agency for ongoing help with accessing services.

## 12.4 Support Recommendations

- Holistic support for survivors should be understood as a core component of redress.
- Comprehensive community agencies should be at the centre of the programme's survivor-support strategy. The best community agencies are local, personable, and comprehensive. They take a holistic approach centred on the survivor's well-being.
- Funding for support, or its provision, should supplement and augment existing public services. It should not duplicate.
- The support provided by comprehensive local agencies must be accompanied by services accessible to all survivors, including those in rural

areas. This may include itinerant services alongside remote telephone, email, and video call options.

- Community agencies may need help adapting to the workload and skills challenges created by redress programmes.
- Having survivors work with survivors through redress can be widely beneficial, despite the challenges involved.
- Offending NGOs (such as churches) can provide effective support services. However, survivors should never be compelled to engage with offending organisations.
- All redress programmes should consider funding legal assistance. It is necessary in more complex programmes.
- Programmes must take proactive steps to reduce the potential for legal professionals to harm and exploit survivors. This can include trauma-informed training and ensuring that funding structures promote survivors' well-being.
- Professional support services are best delivered as part of a comprehensive and holistic service.
- Survivors should be able to choose and retain the legal counsel of their choice, however, Australia's knowmore service offers a good practice model that combines legal and financial advice along with professional counselling.
- Programmes should provide survivors with specialist records access support. This can include developing efficient and comprehensive data management systems and by training and funding local service providers.
- Those who provide counselling support should do so in line with best practice. The design of counselling support and its funding should enable an adequate standard of care.
- Programmes should consider offering counselling as a redress outcome.
- Effective financial advice needs to be attractive, responsive, and accessible.