



knowmore Legal Service

SEPTEMBER 2018

Funding of \$540,000 per annum for two years has been provided to knowmore legal service to employ financial counsellors. knowmore legal service is a community legal centre set up to assist victims and survivors of child sexual abuse. The service was established in 2013 in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Another recommendation from the Royal Commission was to establish a National Redress Scheme to pay compensation to victims/survivors. This was implemented by the Commonwealth Government on 1st July 2018. Around 60,000 people are eligible to apply for compensation, with the maximum payment set at \$150,000 and the average expected to be \$76,000.

There are complex legal/financial issues surrounding the receipt of a redress payment and these funds have a particular legal status in certain contexts. Financial counsellors can provide advice about how the payments will affect a person's overall financial position such as impacts on Centrelink payments, public housing, tax, child support, discuss the impact on debts and assist in building future financial resilience, including avoiding scams or financial abuse.

Disappointingly however, the Government did not adopt a further recommendation from the Royal Commission to fund additional financial counselling services. The Foundation's funding will go some way toward meeting the demand for financial counselling services. The financial counsellors to be employed by knowmore will become experts in the National Redress Scheme and in delivering trauma informed care. We hope they will also be able to act as a source of information and knowledge for other financial counsellors. The funding the Foundation is providing however will not be enough and based on estimated demand, there will still be a serious shortfall in the number of financial counsellors available to help victims/survivors of child abuse.

Trustees

The trustees of the Foundation are:

- **George Brouwer**
(Chair)—formerly Victorian State Ombudsman
- **Carolyn Bond AO**
Consumer advocate, former co-CEO of the Consumer Action Law Centre
- **Greg Tanzer**
Most recently a Commissioner at the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. Greg is also a board member of Financial Counselling Australia.
- **Dr Betty Weule AM**
Well known financial counsellor and founder of the first financial counselling service in NSW.

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