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Rockliff pledges justice

Promise to victim-survivors

David Killick

Premier Jeremy Rockliff has vowed justice on behalf of victim-survivors of abuse in state institutions.

The Liberal government has faced criticism in recent days after claims some state service employees had dodged accountability for their role in historical failures because of shortcomings in legislation and legal wrangling.

Independent Legislative Councillor Meg Webb named 22 people and eight organisations as having produced Procedural Fairness Responses to the commission, saying answers were needed to maintain public confidence.

On Friday, Mr Rockliff said he was determined to deliver the recommendations of the commission of inquiry – and to ensure that those guilty of misconduct faced appropriate sanction.

“Anyone that has harmed children will be held accountable. Anyone that has done the wrong thing will be held accountable,” he said.

“I give that iron-clad guarantee to every victim-survivor in Tasmania, who have been traumatised horrifically and will live with that for the rest of their lives.

“Those are the people that I focus on and I assure every single Tasmanian that we absolutely set up the commission of inquiry to get to the bottom of this, to shine a light on the wrongs of the past and so we can ensure that the wrongs of the past are never repeated.”

Mr Rockliff would not say whether he had sought a copy of a letter from the commission of inquiry identifying all state service employees against whom adverse findings could have been made.



Premier
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Rockliff.

In state parliament this week, he corrected his earlier denials the government had the list, saying the letter had been received by government lawyers in April.

“I’ve provided a statement to parliament, which has covered those matters and I can assure you that anyone that has done the wrong thing will be held fully accountable,” Mr Rockliff said.

“On the 1st of December, we will announce a more comprehensive plan moving forward when it comes to the implementation of the recommendations, and indeed, of course, an additional week of parliament where that comprehensive response can be scrutinised by parliament and parliamentarians, as should be the case.”

The Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government’s Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings was established by then-premier Peter Gutwein in 2020.

It handed down its final report in September.

The commission issued 30 notices to 22 people that they faced potential adverse findings. Only one person was named in its final report. In the report, the three commissioners expressed frustration that lawyers acting for the state government and public servants had argued the legislation governing the commission’s work did not allow adverse findings to be made against them.

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