

# \$75m for ex-Ashley detainees

## Settlement compo for abuse, trauma

**David Killick**

The state government has agreed to pay \$75m to settle a class action brought by former detainees at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

Lawyers acting for the state of Tasmania on Friday offered the settlement to 129 claimants who suffered abuse at the notorious centre between 1960 and 2023.

The deal was reached after two weeks of mediation talks in Hobart.

Law firm Angela Sdrinis Legal represented the former detainees.

Lawyer Angela Sdrinis welcomed the settlement offer as "very fair".

The agreement still needs to be approved by a Supreme Court judge.

"If we hadn't resolved this today then the cost, the delay, the trauma to our clients, this weeping issue that Ashley has become to this state would have just kept on going," Ms Sdrinis said.

She praised the government and its legal team for taking a co-operative approach to reaching the settlement.

"I am pleased that the matter has resolved in principle and that we have been able to give our clients a voice.

"The government lawyers were provided with details of the allegations and impacts on each member of the class and I



Lawyer  
Angela  
Sdrinis.

am satisfied that they were heard.

"I believe that our clients will be happy with the outcome. ASL is pleased to have been able to reach this resolution on their behalf.

"We wish to acknowledge that the government was proactive in progressing the settlement and co-operated with ASL to bring the matter to a prompt resolution in a trauma-informed way.

"The class action was filed in the Supreme Court in August 2022 and it has taken less than two years to resolve.

"Financial counselling will also be made available to all group members who will be encouraged to get advice."

The class action was lodged with the Supreme Court in August 2022 on behalf of four lead claimants identified only as JC, RI, QA and CA.

They alleged that they suffered injuries as a result of systemic negligence in the management of Ashley between 1961 and December 2019.

The state of Tasmania was accused of failing to take reasonable care in the selection

and supervision of staff, including some with links to outlaw motorcycle gangs and others who continued in employment despite being the subject of repeated complaints.

Specific allegations included the use of degrading strip-search procedures, forcibly applied scabies treatments that caused burns to detainees' bodies including their genitalia, failure to provide appropriate medical treatment and the use of isolation and beatings as punishment.

The ongoing physical, sexual and psychological abuse of young people at the Deloraine facility was a major theme of the Commission of Inquiry.

The centre has repeatedly drawn the attention of international human rights bodies including the United Nations Committee against Torture.

Ms Sdrinis said it would take some time to distribute the settlement funds, which are expected to be resolved and paid within 12 months.

Independent Member for Nelson Meg Webb said the shocking allegation of a recent incident of serious abuse at the centre raised serious duty of care concerns.

"The Premier and his minister are both now clearly on notice," she said.

The state government declined to comment on the settlement on Friday.

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