

UNSPENT INDIGENOUS WAGES AND SAVINGS REPARATIONS FUNDS

Frequently Asked Questions

QUESTION	ANSWER
1. Why did the Queensland Government make the original reparations offer?	<p>1. The reparations offer was made by the Queensland Government in the spirit of reconciliation. It recognised the historical injustices suffered by many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through the controls imposed by the successive governments over their wages and savings during the period from the 1890s to the early 1970s.</p> <p>The Queensland Government was committed to negotiating an outcome to this matter, recognising that legal actions were likely to be extremely complex and expensive and would take time to resolve.</p> <p>Because a lot of the people affected by past control of their wages and savings were elderly, the Government offered a simple and speedy way to resolve these issues. Under this offer, priority was given to paying elderly people and those who were seriously ill.</p>
2. What was the original offer?	<p>2. The Queensland Government made an offer of up to \$55.4 million for individual reparations payments.</p> <p>The offer included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$4,000 to each person alive on 9 May 2002, who was subject to Government controls over their wages or savings and who was born on or before 31 December 1951;• \$2,000 to each person alive on 9 May 2002, who was subject to Government controls over their wages or savings and who were born between 1 January 1952 and 31 December 1956;• A written apology;• A parliamentary acknowledgement – a statement in the Legislative Assembly; and• A protocol to acknowledge Traditional Owners at the commencement of all official government business.

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3. Why were there two (2) different amounts offered as reparations?	<p>3. People born before 31 December 1951 were subject to the 1897 and/or the 1939 Acts. Their work and savings were subject to intensive controls under these Acts. They were offered \$4,000.</p> <p>People born between January 1952 and December 1956 were more likely to have worked and had their savings controlled under the 1965 Act. This Act removed some of the controls, such as compulsory contributions to the Aborigines Welfare Fund, included in the earlier legislation. They were offered \$2,000.</p>
4. How many people received a reparation payment?	<p>4. All 8,761 claims lodged within the claimable period were assessed, with 5,553 claims, or 63.5 per cent, being eligible for a reparation payment.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">5,553 people received reparation payments.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">4,211 received \$4,000</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1,342 received \$2,000</p>
5. What is the unspent reparations money?	<p>5. This is money left over from the reparations process. The Queensland Government allocated up to \$55.4 million for reparations payments. When the process was finalised, \$19.528 million had been paid to eligible claimants, leaving \$35.872 million unspent.</p> <p>(See also Question 1 as to why the original reparations offer was made)</p>
6. How much is left?	6. \$35.872 million
7. Why is there an unspent balance?	<p>7. Using data from the 2001 Census, an estimate was made in 2002 of the number of Indigenous people living in Queensland and who were born before 31 December 1956, the eligibility cut-off date.</p> <p>There is an unspent balance either because the take-up rate for the reparations offer was less than expected and/or the original numbers were over-estimated.</p>

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8. How and when will we find out what will happen to the unspent reparations money?	<p>8. The Queensland Government wants to make sure that as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as possible can express their views on how the unspent reparations could be spent. It is therefore undertaking a comprehensive consultation process.</p> <p>The Government will make a decision on what is to happen to the unspent funds following the consultation. It is anticipated that this decision will be made by the end of 2007.</p> <p>(See Question 14 for information about the options being considered)</p> <p>(See Question 15 for information on the consultation process)</p>
9. When will I receive a “top up” or second payment?	<p>9. The Queensland Government wants to make sure that as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as possible can express their views on how the unspent reparations could be spent. It is therefore undertaking a comprehensive consultation process.</p> <p>The Government will make a decision on what is to happen to the unspent funds as soon as possible after the consultation concludes in October 2007. If there is to be a second payment, this will be made as soon as possible after Government makes its decision.</p>
10. I didn't claim because I thought the offer wasn't enough. Now that it's likely to be topped up, can I put in a claim?	<p>10. The final date for applications was 31 January 2006. No further claims will be accepted.</p>
11. What about family members who have passed away since they received their reparation payment?	<p>11. The Government will make a decision on what is to happen to the unspent funds as soon as possible after the consultation concludes in October 2007. What will happen in situations such as where family members have passed away, will be considered at that time.</p> <p>(See Question 14 for information about the options being considered)</p> <p>(See Question 15 for information on the consultation process)</p>

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12. What is the Stolen Wages Working Group?	<p>12. The Stolen Wages Working Group is a group of Elders, claimants and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members affected by past government controls over wages and savings.</p> <p>The Group has actively campaigned for some years regarding the Indigenous Wages and Savings Reparation scheme.</p>
13. What happened at the workshop held in Cairns in late July 2007?	<p>13. In late July 2007, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Warren Pitt, attended a workshop in Cairns with representatives of the Stolen Wages Working Group.</p> <p>At the workshop potential options for the use of the unspent reparations funds were discussed and also the need to consult more widely with Indigenous people about this.</p> <p>(See Question 14 for information about the options being considered)</p> <p>(See Question 15 for information on the consultation process)</p>
14. What are the options being considered for the use of the unspent reparations money?	<p>14. There are two (2) options being considered at this time:</p> <p>Option 1</p> <p>The first option is the distribution of the full balance (\$35.87 million) to previously successful claimants.</p> <p>Option 2</p> <p>The second option is the distribution of part of the balance to previously successful claimants with the remainder of the balance used for the benefit of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the establishment of an Indigenous-controlled foundation.</p> <p>View the Options Factsheet at www.indigenous.qld.gov.au</p>

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15. What is this consultation process?	<p>15. The consultation process includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a media release from the Minister about the consultation; • an information package sent to eligible claimants; • advertisements about the consultation in print, radio and television media; • information on the Department of Communities website on the unspent reparations money; • the opportunity to provide comment through the Queensland Government's community engagement website: www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au; (available from Monday 10 September) • 1800 809 097 (Toll-free) number for information; • a set of frequently asked questions and answers; and • community information sharing sessions.
16. Why is the Queensland Government doing this consultation?	<p>16. The Queensland Government wants to make sure that as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as possible can express their views on how the unspent reparations could be spent to assist in informing its decision making.</p>
17. Where are the community information sharing sessions being held?	<p>17. There will 15 community information sharing sessions held throughout Queensland in late September/early October 2007:</p> <p>Cairns: Maryborough; Mareeba; Rockhampton; Cooktown; Mackay; Weipa; Townsville; Thursday Island; Mount Isa; Normanton; Brisbane; Ipswich; Toowoomba; Roma; Cherbourg</p>
18. What if I want more information, such as when a community information session will be on?	<p>18. Call the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships on 1800 809 097 (Toll-free) for contact for information or access details of regional offices at www.indigenous.qld.gov.au.</p>
19. What about the Aborigines Welfare Fund?	<p>19. The Aborigines Welfare Fund is being dealt with separately from the unspent reparations money.</p>

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QUESTION	ANSWER
20. Can I access my records? What happens to them?	20. To access your records, please phone the Community and Personal Histories Team in the Department of Communities on 1800 650 230 (toll-free within Australia) [†] or on (07) 3404 3622
21. What has the consultation on the unspent reparations funds got to do with the Compensation for Non-payment of Award Wages (1975-1986) Scheme and the payments to mission workers.	<p>21. These are three (3) separate processes or schemes.</p> <p>(1) <u>Indigenous Wages and Savings Reparations Scheme</u> is now closed and we are now consulting on how the unspent funds should be used. (refer to Questions 5 -10; 14-15.</p> <p>(2) <u>Compensation for Non-payment of Award Wages (1975-1986) Scheme</u> This compensation process made payments of \$7,000 to former employees of the department in the period November 1975 to October 1986 and who were not paid award wages for work that they performed. This process is now closed.</p> <p>(3) <u>Settlement of Federal Court Cases of former Mission Workers</u> The State is currently settling these cases through settlement conferences and mediations</p>