



**Royal Commission**  
into Institutional Responses  
to Child Sexual Abuse

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

↑ August 2016

Ms Teresa Devlin  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland  
New House, Saint Patrick's College  
Maynooth  
Co. Kildare

**BY EMAIL ONLY:** REDACTED

Dear Ms Devlin,

**The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**

The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was appointed in 2013 by the Governor-General of Australia to specially investigate how institutions have responded to allegations and instances of child sexual abuse and to uncover where systems have failed to protect children.

The role of the Royal Commission is to identify best practices and recommend the laws, policies, practices and systems that will effectively prevent or, where it occurs, respond to the sexual abuse of children in institutions. The Royal Commission will report on its final recommendations to the Governor-General of Australia in late 2017.

**The Royal Commission's work on institutions of the Catholic Church in Australia**

To date, the Royal Commission has held 41 formal public hearings into child sexual abuse and how institutions like schools, churches and government organisations responded to allegations of abuse. A number of those hearings have concerned institutions of the Catholic Church in Australia.

The Royal Commission will hold a final hearing regarding the institutional response to child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church in Australia in February 2017. The final hearing will be held in Sydney, Australia. It is anticipated that, at that hearing, the Royal Commission may address the response to child sexual abuse by Catholic Church clergy in international jurisdictions, including Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In its final report containing its recommendations, the Royal Commission may also refer to the approach of Catholic Church established child protection bodies internationally in making recommendations to the Catholic Church in Australia about its response to child sexual abuse.

In respect of this, the Royal Commission is particularly interested in the activities of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland ('the National Board') in setting the standards for child and youth protection and overseeing the implementation and maintenance of those standards.

**Request to provide documents**

In order to assist the Royal Commission in its preparation for that final hearing and its final report, we would be very grateful if you are able to provide us with information about your mandate and operations, including:

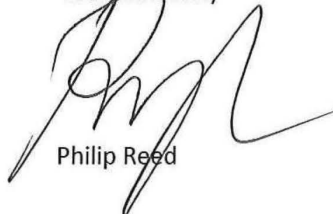
1. Your terms of reference, or any other documents that set out the mandate of the National Board and define its operations
2. Any standards, policies or procedures that the National Board applies, or recommendations that the National Board has made, in respect of the response of Catholic Church authorities and institutions to child sexual abuse on the matters below:
  - a. in response to complaints of child sexual abuse received by them
  - b. in response to:
    - i. claims in relation to child sexual abuse made under an established redress process
    - ii. civil litigation in relation to child sexual abuse
  - c. preventing child sexual abuse, including in relation to the supervision of or access to children by Catholic Church personnel
  - d. management of Catholic Church members or personnel who are the subject of a complaint of child sexual abuse, including:
    - i. referral to the police
    - ii. referral to counselling or therapy
    - iii. supervised or restricted ministry
    - iv. the provision of information about any complaints or allegations of child sexual abuse to any institution to which the member is transferring
    - v. the approach to or management of any member who has been convicted of child sexual abuse
    - vi. the approach to or management of any member against whom an allegation of child sexual abuse has been otherwise substantiated
    - vii. who has admitted to a complaint of child sexual abuse
  - e. any action taken under canon law, including:
    - i. to remove or restrict the ministry of any member
    - ii. referral or application by a local ordinary to remove or restrict the ministry of any member
3. Any standards, policies or procedures that the National Board applies in ensuring compliance and implementation of its standards, policies, procedures or recommendations by Catholic Church authorities and institutions.

**Discussion with you**

We would also be grateful for the opportunity to speak with you in your capacity as the Chief Executive Officer of the National Board about its operations after we have had an opportunity to review any material you provide. If you are available to speak with the Royal Commission, we would be grateful if you would contact us to organise a day and time that would be convenient to you.

Please direct your reply to: [stacey.hahn@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](mailto:stacey.hahn@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



Philip Reed