



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

23 May 2016

Mr Wayne Alcorn
National President
Australian Christian Churches
Sydney Head Office
PO Box 8093
Baulkham Hills BC NSW 2153

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Dear Mr Alcorn

Case Study 18

The Royal Commission will be conducting hearings into certain institutions which have been the subject of a case study.

The hearings will examine actions taken by institutions, after the hearing and after the publication of the case study report to enhance the safety of children within their care, to improve the effectiveness of their responses to reports of child sexual abuse and to alleviate the impact of past and future child sexual abuse within those institutions. The public hearings will also examine any other relevant actions taken by an institution.

Australian Christian Churches (formerly Assemblies of God in Australia) was a subject of inquiry in *Case Study 18: the response of the Australian Christian Churches and affiliated Pentecostal churches*, the public hearing for which was held in Sydney in October 2014. The Case Study Report was published in November 2015.

To assist our preparation for the hearings we request that Australian Christian Churches provide a written response to the matters broadly described above, and to the specific questions in Annexure A.

A notice requiring the production your response, together with all supporting documents, will be served on **20 June 2016** and will be returnable on **27 June 2016**.

Please do not hesitate to contact David Allen on 02 8282 3877 or by email david.allen@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au if you wish to discuss any aspect of this request.

Yours sincerely



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Annexure A – Australian Christian Churches – Case study 18

1. What has Australian Christian Churches learnt from Case study 18?
2. What action has Australian Christian Churches taken as a result of the Case Study? In particular, any action relating to:
 - a. organisational structure, governance and culture
 - b. the promotion of a child safe organisation
 - c. child protection policy and procedures
 - d. staff recruitment policy and procedures
 - e. training and supervision of staff
 - f. policy and procedures to document and respond to allegations of child sexual abuse redress policies and procedures
 - g. any communication of policies and procedures to the members of churches within Australian Christian Churches
 - h. promote compliance with relevant policies and procedures.
3. What consultations were held, and what materials were considered, in the formulation of these policies and procedures?
4. What impediments did, or does, Australian Christian Churches face in implementing these policies and procedures and any other reforms? What are the proposed measures to overcome these impediments?
5. Please provide detailed responses as to how, if at all, the Australian Christian Churches has addressed the following matters:
 - a. ensuring compliance with its complaint procedure
 - b. the outcome of discussions to amend the Ministerial Code of Conduct to include a requirement for affiliated churches to adopt child protection policies of the standard recommended by the Australian Christian Churches state executive
 - c. whether a person is now required to be credentialed by Australian Christian Churches in order to hold him or herself out as a 'Pastor' or 'Youth Pastor' in an affiliated church
 - d. how conflicts of interest are managed when responding to allegations of child sexual abuse
 - e. whether the Grievance Procedure of the Australian Christian Churches and its affiliated churches still requires reports of child sexual abuse to be made in writing.
6. Have allegations of child sexual abuse been received by the Australian Christian Churches since Case Study 18? If so, please record the following in respect to each allegation in the enclosed Microsoft Excel spreadsheet:
 - a. nature of the alleged sexual abuse
 - b. date and period of alleged sexual abuse
 - c. gender and age of alleged perpetrator(s) and victim

- d. the internal assessment and investigation report by Australian Christian Churches
- e. report(s) made to an authorised department and/or law enforcement agency and/or any other agency by Australian Christian Churches about those allegations
- f. whether the victim sought any form of redress
- g. whether the victim was offered any form of redress
- h. whether a legal claim has resulted from the alleged sexual abuse
- i. what policies and procedures were followed in responding to the allegation
- j. whether disciplinary actions were undertaken
- k. feedback from survivors and their families regarding Australian Christian Churches' response to the allegation.