



Royal Commission
into Institutional Responses
to Child Sexual Abuse

23 May 2016

Mr Brian Houston
Chairperson
Hillsong Church
PO Box 1765
Castle Hill NSW 1765

c-/ Peter Wilson
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North Sydney NSW 2060

By e-mail: pwilson@prolegis.com.au

Dear Mr Houston

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.

Hillsong Church (formerly Sydney Christian Life Centre and Hills Christian Life Centre) was a subject of inquiry in *Case Study 18: the response of the Australian Christian Churches and affiliated Pentecostal churches to allegations of child sexual abuse*, 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 Hillsong Church 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



Tony Giugni

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Annexure A – Hillsong Church – Case study 18

1. What has Hillsong Church learnt from Case study 18?
2. What action has the Hillsong Church 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 Hillsong Church
 - 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, Hillsong Church face in implementing these policies and procedures and any other reforms? What are the proposed measures to overcome these impediments?
5. Please provided detailed responses as to how, if at all, the Hillsong Church has addressed the following matters:
 - a. responding to the issues identified by its child protection 'gap analysis' completed in or around October 2014
 - b. developing a formal policy to identify and manage conflicts of interest when responding to allegations of child sexual abuse
 - c. having a disciplinary process for perpetrators of child sexual abuse and reporting the outcomes of completed disciplinary processes to the New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People
 - d. establishing policy and procedure for the referral of allegations of child sexual abuse to the police, including those of an historical nature.
6. Have allegations of child sexual abuse been received by the Hillsong Church 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(s) by Hillsong Church and associated bodies
- e. report(s) made to an authorised department and/or law enforcement agency and/or any other agency by Hillsong Church 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 Hillsong Church's response to the allegation.