



**ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES
TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

AT SYDNEY

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Royal Commissions Act 1902

**PUBLIC HEARING INTO
CATHOLIC CHURCH AUTHORITIES
CASE STUDY 50**

OPENING BY SENIOR COUNSEL ASSISTING

1. This is the Royal Commission's 50th public hearing. Its scope and purpose is to consider:
 - a. The current policies and procedures of Catholic Church authorities in Australia in relation to child protection and child-safe standards, including responding to allegations of child sexual abuse.
 - b. Factors that may have contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse at Catholic Church institutions in Australia.
 - c. Factors that may have affected the institutional response of Catholic Church authorities in Australia to child sexual abuse.

- d. The responses of Catholic Church authorities in Australia to relevant case study reports and other Royal Commission reports.
 - e. Data relating to the extent of claims of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church in Australia.
 - f. Any related matters.
2. As with other review hearings being conducted by the Royal Commission, the purpose of this public hearing is not to inquire into individual sets of facts or particular events in a forensic manner as has occurred in previous Royal Commission case studies.
 3. Over the last four years, the Royal Commission has conducted public hearings in relation to 116 institutions.
 4. The matters examined in a public hearing were carefully chosen. There were a large number of institutions reported in private sessions and elsewhere and there were necessary limits on the Royal Commission's resources.
 5. To ensure these resources were used effectively, criteria were applied to identify appropriate matters and bring them forward as individual case studies.
 6. Factors taken into account included:
 - a. whether the Royal Commission had received a large number of accounts about a particular institution or group of institutions
 - b. the availability of witnesses (both survivors and institutional staff) and documents

- c. whether the case study highlighted systemic issues
 - d. the need for the Royal Commission to ensure that an appropriate range and type of institution was covered and
 - e. the need to hold public hearings into institutions located in all states and territories.
7. It was plain that hearings were needed to examine the responses of faith-based institutions, given that, as at the end of 2016, 60% of survivors attending a private session reported abuse in those institutions. Of those survivors, nearly two thirds reported abuse in Catholic institutions. While the percentage has varied over time, at present over 37% of all private session attendees reported sexual abuse in a Catholic institution. Consequently Catholic institutions were a key part of the Royal Commission's public hearings.
8. In response to the announcement of this Royal Commission, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia, which together represent dioceses, archdioceses and religious congregations across Australia, jointly established the Truth Justice and Healing Council.
9. As I understand it, the Truth Justice and Healing Council was established to coordinate and oversee the Church's overall response to and appearance at hearings of the Royal Commission. Pursuant to arrangements made with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia, the Truth Justice and Healing Council acts for all archdioceses and dioceses in Australia and for all of the major religious orders, with the exception of three of the eastern rite eparchies.

Catholic data survey background

10. The Royal Commission has undertaken a comprehensive data survey of Catholic Church authorities in Australia to gather information about the extent of claims of child sexual abuse made against Catholic Church personnel. This includes claims made against any current or former priest, religious brother or sister, or any other person employed in or appointed to a voluntary position by a Catholic Church authority.
11. Catholic Church authorities include archdioceses, dioceses and religious orders also known as congregations.
12. This project was undertaken with the assistance of the Truth, Justice and Healing Council and the Catholic Church authorities who provided the data about claims of child sexual abuse.
13. The Royal Commission is very grateful for this assistance. We appreciate the amount of work involved. The project would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Council and the Catholic Church Authorities.
14. The Royal Commission engaged independent data analysts to design the claims survey.
15. The Royal Commission engaged with the Council about the design of the survey. The survey was initially trialled by two Catholic Church authorities. Following their response and further consultation with the Council, the survey was amended. The Royal Commission and the Council agreed on the final version of the survey to be completed by each Catholic Church authority.

16. Each Catholic Church authority entered data about each claim of child sexual abuse that they had received. The Royal Commission and the Council provided assistance to Catholic Church authorities regarding how the survey was to be populated and technical aspects of the survey.
17. The Royal Commission gave each Catholic Church authority who completed a claims survey a spreadsheet containing their data in order for them to check the details of each claim. The independent data analysts addressed any concerns raised. After this process a spreadsheet was given to the Council containing all of the data collected from all Catholic Church authorities.
18. The Council engaged a statistician to ensure the accuracy of the work done by the independent data analysts.
19. There has been ongoing discussion between all involved, including the experts, for some months.
20. I will be opening shortly on some of the results of the data survey and tendering the relevant data and analysis which supports those results.
21. The balance of the data will be tendered before the end of this public hearing.

Data sources

22. Information was gathered from three sources, by way of data surveys. The Royal Commission surveyed:
 - a. Catholic Church authorities in Australia regarding claims of child sexual abuse made against Catholic Church personnel.

- b. Ten Catholic religious orders regarding the total number of religious brothers and sisters who were members of these orders and who ministered in Australia between 1950 and 2010.
 - c. 75 Catholic Church authorities with priest members, including archdioceses, dioceses and religious orders, regarding the total number of priests who were members of their authority and who served as Catholic priests in Australia between 1950 and 2010.
- 23. The Royal Commission sought data regarding all claims received by a Catholic Church authority between 1 January 1980 and 28 February 2015. There was no limitation imposed in relation to the date of the alleged incidents of child sexual abuse.
- 24. The term claim includes:
 - a. Claims of child sexual abuse made against Catholic Church personnel by a claimant, or a solicitor or advocate on their behalf, seeking redress through *Towards Healing*, the *Melbourne Response* or another redress process, including civil proceedings, whether ongoing, settled or concluded without redress.
 - b. Complaints of child sexual abuse against Catholic Church personnel made by any person without redress being sought, that are substantiated following an investigation by the relevant Catholic Church authority or another body, or otherwise accepted by the relevant Catholic Church authority.
- 25. The term 'alleged perpetrator' is used to describe a person subject to an allegation, complaint or claim related to child sexual abuse. The Truth

Justice and Healing Council told the Royal Commission that it was of the view that the term 'named individual' should be used. In the Royal Commission's view, 'alleged perpetrator' more accurately describes a person who has been the subject of a claim of child sexual abuse.

Catholic Data Project results

26. Between January 1980 and February 2015, 4,444 people alleged incidents of child sexual abuse made to 93 Catholic Church authorities. These claims related to over 1000 separate institutions.
27. The claims survey sought information about the people who made claims of child sexual abuse. Where the gender of people making a claim was reported, 78% were male and 22% were female. Of those people who made claims of child sexual abuse received by religious orders with only religious brother members, 97% were male.
28. The average age of people who made claims of child sexual abuse, at the time of the alleged abuse, was 10.5 for girls and 11.6 for boys. The average time between the alleged abuse and the date a claim was made was 33 years.
29. The claims survey sought information about alleged perpetrators of child sexual abuse. A total of 1,880 alleged perpetrators were identified in claims of child sexual abuse. Over 500 unknown people were identified as alleged perpetrators. It cannot be determined whether any of those people whose identities are unknown were identified by another claimant in a separate claim.
30. Of the 1,880 identified alleged perpetrators:

- a. 597 or 32% were religious brothers
 - b. 572 or 30% were priests
 - c. 543 or 29% were lay people
 - d. 96 or 5% were religious sisters.
31. Of all alleged perpetrators, 90% were male and 10% were female.
32. The Royal Commission surveyed 75 Catholic Church authorities with priest members, including archdioceses, dioceses and religious orders about the number of their members who ministered in Australia between 1 January 1950 and 31 December 2010. Ten Catholic religious orders with religious brother or sister members provided the same information about their members.
33. This information, when analysed in conjunction with the claims data, enabled calculation of the proportion of priests and religious brother and sister members of these Catholic Church authorities who ministered in this period and who were alleged perpetrators.
34. Of priests from the 75 Catholic Church authorities with priest members surveyed, who ministered in Australia between 1950 and 2010, 7.9% of diocesan priests were alleged perpetrators and 5.7% of religious priests were alleged perpetrators. Overall, 7% of priests were alleged perpetrators.
35. The Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Dominican Friars had the lowest overall proportion of priests who ministered in the period 1950 to 2010 and were alleged perpetrators, at 2.4% and 2.1% respectively.

36. The following five archdioceses or dioceses with priest members which had the highest overall proportion of priests who ministered in the period 1950 to 2010 and who were alleged perpetrators:

- a. 11.7% of priests from the Diocese of Wollongong were alleged perpetrators
- b. 13.9% of priests from the Diocese of Lismore were alleged perpetrators
- c. 14.1% of priests from the Diocese of Port Pirie were alleged perpetrators
- d. 14.7% of priests from the Diocese of Sandhurst were alleged perpetrators
- e. 15.1% of priests from the Diocese of Sale were alleged perpetrators.

37. The following five religious orders with priest members had the highest overall proportion of priests who ministered in the period 1950 to 2010 and who were alleged perpetrators:

- a. 8.0% of priests from the Vincentians – The Congregation of the Mission were alleged perpetrators
- b. 13.7% of priests from the Pallottines – Society of the Catholic Apostolate were alleged perpetrators
- c. 13.9% of priests from the Marist Fathers – Society of Mary were alleged perpetrators, as distinct from the Marist Brothers

- d. 17.2% of priests from the Salesians of Don Bosco were alleged perpetrators
 - e. 21.5% of priests from the Benedictine Community of New Norcia were alleged perpetrators.
38. In relation to religious orders with religious brother and sister members, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart and the Sisters of Mercy (Brisbane) had the lowest overall proportions of members who were alleged perpetrators, at 0.6% and 0.3% respectively.
39. The following five religious orders with only religious brother members had the highest overall proportion of religious brothers who ministered in the period 1950 to 2010 and who were alleged perpetrators:
- a. 13.8% of De La Salle Brothers were alleged perpetrators
 - b. 20.4% of Marist Brothers were alleged perpetrators
 - c. 21.9% of Salesians of Don Bosco brothers were alleged perpetrators
 - d. 22.0% of Christian Brothers were alleged perpetrators
 - e. 40.4% of St John of God Brothers were alleged perpetrators.
40. I tender the relevant data and analysis which supports the results I have referred to.

Information gathering

41. On 13 March 2013, the Royal Commission issued its first notice to produce documents in relation to matters concerning the Catholic Church in Australia.

42. Since then, 669 notices have been issued to Catholic Church authorities. Those authorities include each of the seven archdioceses, 23 dioceses, 57 male religious orders, 84 female religious orders, Catholic Church Insurance Limited, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and various Catholic education offices. As a result of these notices 386,268 documents were produced to the Royal Commission.
43. The Royal Commission has heard evidence from 261 witnesses in case studies focusing on the Catholic Church in Australia, including some witnesses who have been called to appear at more than one public hearing. There have been 14,671 pages of transcript of evidence generated and 707 exhibits.
44. The Chair of the Royal Commission requested documents from the Vatican in relation to John Gerard Nestor, an Australian priest, in July 2013 and received documents in response in January 2014. Some of those documents were tendered during the public hearing of Case Study 14.
45. On 22 April 2014, the Chair sought further documents from the Holy See. They included documents relating to each case involving an Australian priest. This request was made to assist the Commissioners in developing an understanding about the extent to which Australian priests accused of child sexual abuse had been referred to the Holy See and, in particular, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The Royal Commission hoped to gain an understanding of the action taken in each case. The Holy See responded, on 1 July 2014, that it was 'neither possible nor appropriate to provide the information requested'. The Holy See said it would respond 'in the future to appropriate and specific requests'.

46. Documents in relation to a named Australian priest were also sought. In response to this request, the Royal Commission was told that 'to avoid compromising the integrity of the canonical proceeding' it was not possible to provide all of the documents requested.

Public hearings

47. The Royal Commission has conducted 15 public hearings into the conduct of Catholic Church authorities and related institutions. Catholic institutions have participated in other hearings concerning matters of policy.

48. Most but not all reports of these case studies have been tabled in Parliament and published. The remaining reports will be tabled over the coming months. One public hearing has not been completed. That is Case Study 44 into John Joseph Farrell.

49. There could not be a case study into each Catholic institution the subject of a private session. In a number of cases, there are current criminal investigations or prosecutions. Consistent with the Royal Commission's terms of reference a decision was made not to hold a public hearing where to do so may have prejudiced that work.

50. In some cases, survivors were not willing to give evidence, documents were not available and/or the systemic issues had been dealt with in other case studies.

51. It should not be assumed that because a specific institution was not the subject of a case study that its conduct was not reported in a private session.

52. As at the end of 2016, over 2,400 private session attendees reported they were sexually abused in a Catholic institution. Most of those institutions have not been considered in a case study. The type of those Catholic institutions reported, for example a school or parish, the state or territory in which it was located and the diocese or order which was responsible will be published in the final report. All other institutions reported in a private session and not considered in a public hearing will also be documented in the final report in the same manner.
53. The public hearings into the conduct of Catholic institutions have dealt with a range of topics.
54. The redress scheme operating in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the process *Towards Healing* which applies in every other diocese were the subject of three hearings. The lack of independence of each scheme was the subject of adverse comment in each report. The Royal Commission has since reported on redress and civil litigation and the Commonwealth Government has indicated its support for the key recommendations by announcing a Commonwealth Redress Scheme.
55. The Archdiocese of Sydney's response to litigation in the late 2000s by a survivor seeking compensation was the subject of evidence. The instructions given to the Archdiocese's lawyers and the response of its senior office holders and insurers were considered. In the Royal Commission's civil litigation report, reference was made to the conduct of officers of the Archdiocese, among other matters. The Royal Commission made various recommendations designed, in part to overcome the problems which emerged in the case study, particularly to avoid unnecessarily adversarial responses to claims.

56. The handling of complaints and the dealings with accused and convicted Catholic Church personnel in the archdioceses of Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and Canberra and the dioceses of Ballarat, Maitland-Newcastle, Toowoomba and Rockhampton have each featured in case studies. The Catholic Education Office's activities in the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Diocese of Toowoomba were considered. Schools operated by Catholic entities were the subject of many hearings.
57. A number of male religious orders were examined about their responses to complaints. The Christian Brothers and the Marist Brothers have received a significant number of claims of child sexual abuse. Their responses were considered in relation to a number of orphanages and schools in Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales and Canberra.
58. The accounts given by survivors of four such institutions in Western Australia run by the Christian Brothers was particularly harrowing. The Christian Brothers had kept visitation reports and Provincial Council Minutes from 1919 which revealed concerns about Brothers sexually misconducting themselves with children. From 1959, such concerns were no longer reported in the minutes. The lawyers for the Christian Brothers said:

This suggests that these cases are no longer reported in the Council minutes and there may well have been some decision made in the late 1950's not to record these matters.

59. The Diocese of Ballarat was also a focus. That diocese has frequently been referred to as notorious for the number of offenders who at the relevant time were priests in that diocese. Gerald Ridsdale was a priest in that

diocese. Ridsdale is often referred to as Australia's most prolific paedophile priest.

60. In Ballarat, diocesan priests as well as Christian Brothers' conduct was considered. The former and now deceased Bishop of Ballarat was the subject of much adverse evidence. The findings of the Royal Commission in that case study have not yet been published.
61. The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle was also examined. This is another diocese where numbers of priests and religious have been convicted for atrocities against children. Survivors and advocates had long agitated for an inquiry into that diocese. The findings of the Royal Commission in that case study have not yet been published.
62. The manner in which the Church in Australia and the Vatican intersected in dealing with disciplinary action against a priest was considered in the context of a priest in the Diocese of Wollongong in New South Wales.
63. The response of one female religious order to child sexual abuse by a lay person and a priest, in an orphanage in the Diocese of Rockhampton in Queensland was examined.
64. A Catholic institution which provided services to children with disability was the subject of a public hearing. That hearing also heard evidence about dealing with children with sexualised behaviours.
65. In each of those hearings the experience of survivors was heard.
66. The accounts were depressingly similar. Children were ignored or worse, punished. Allegations were not investigated. Priests and religious were moved. The parishes or communities to which they were moved knew

nothing of their past. Documents were not kept or they were destroyed. Secrecy prevailed as did cover ups. Priests and religious were not properly dealt with and outcomes were often not representative of their crimes. Many children suffered and continue as adults to suffer from their experiences in some Catholic institutions.

67. Many of the findings of the Royal Commission in its published reports are consistent with the finding in the Irish report of the Commission of Investigation into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin which was published in 2009. The report said that, in dealing with cases of child sexual abuse the Archdiocese of Dublin was preoccupied, at least until the mid-1990s, with *'the maintenance of secrecy, the avoidance of scandal, the protection of the reputation of the Church, and the preservation of its assets. All other considerations, including the welfare of children and justice for the victims, were subordinate to these priorities'*.

Catholic Church Insurance Project

68. Many Catholic Church institutions were insured by the Catholic Church Insurance Limited. As part of its investigations, the Royal Commission reviewed documents produced by Catholic Church Insurance. Some of those documents were tendered during public hearings. Many related to investigations conducted by Catholic Church Insurance when it received a claim from an insured in relation to a named offender or alleged perpetrator of child sexual abuse. Catholic Church Insurance conducted those investigations to establish whether the relevant insured, a Catholic Church authority, had prior knowledge of the named offender's or alleged perpetrator's propensity to abuse.

69. During 2015, after liaising with Catholic Church Insurance, the Royal Commission required the production of documents in relation to all cases where Catholic Church Insurance had determined prior knowledge on the part of a Catholic Church authority. The term 'prior knowledge' was based on the definition used by Catholic Church Insurance in its investigations, which referred to knowledge held by a senior official of the relevant Church authority.
70. The Royal Commission received over 128,000 documents from Catholic Church Insurance. During the course of this hearing the documents relating to prior knowledge of Catholic Church authorities in relation to a number of offenders or alleged perpetrators will be tendered and referred to in the Royal Commission's final report.

Section 6P referrals and prosecutions

71. The Royal Commission has done more than hear evidence at public hearings, conduct private sessions and review documents involving Catholic institutions. The Chair of the Royal Commission has made 309 referrals to police in all states and the Australian Capital Territory in relation to allegations of child sexual abuse involving Catholic Church institutions.
72. As a result of those referrals there have been 27 prosecutions. Seventy-five matters are currently being investigated. The victim or the accused has died in 37 cases and 66 matters are pending. 'Pending' means that a referral has been made, and the Royal Commission is waiting for information about allocation of the matter within the receiving agency. In relation to the other referrals, some have been used for intelligence

purposes, there has been insufficient evidence or the complaint has been withdrawn.

Issues Paper

73. In June 2016, the Royal Commission released an Issues Paper seeking submissions on a range of matters relevant to this hearing.

74. Those matters included the extent to which the following issues may have contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions or affected the institutional response to this abuse:

- a. the Catholic Church's structure and governance, including the role of the Vatican
- b. issues related to the individual leadership of Catholic institutions
- c. canon law
- d. clericalism
- e. mandatory celibacy
- f. selection, screening, training and ongoing formation of candidates for the priesthood and religious life
- g. support for and supervision of working priests and religious
- h. the operation of the sacrament of confession
- i. the use of secrecy, including the practice of mental reservation
- j. individual psycho-sexual factors
- k. factors operating in society as a whole.

75. The current and future proposed approaches of Catholic Church authorities were also identified.
76. The Royal Commission received over 80 submissions in response to the Issues Paper.
77. The Catholic Church's structure and governance, including the role of the Vatican and issues related to the individual leadership of Catholic institutions featured heavily in the submissions as a factor that may have contributed to the occurrence of the abuse and certainly to the institutional response to it. The issues of a rigid hierarchy based on obedience to bishops and to the Pope, and lack of accountability to the faithful emerged as themes. The lack of women in positions of leadership was identified by many as a relevant factor.
78. Several submissions were received from former priests and religious or people who had commenced training but left during their formation. They spoke of their young age when entering training, the absence of teaching about intimacy or friendship during their training, and inadequate teaching on the reality of celibacy and understanding their own sexuality.
79. The majority of submissions received by the Royal Commission have been published on the website. All of the submissions received will be used to inform the Royal Commission's work. Some of the submissions will be tendered during the course of this hearing because they are relevant to particular witnesses who will be giving evidence.

Structure of the hearing

80. In May 2016, in preparation for this hearing, the Royal Commission gave the Truth Justice and Healing Council the opportunity to inform the Royal

Commission about the issues it saw as relevant to this review hearing, the witnesses which it wished called and any other research it wanted the Royal Commission to take into account.

81. In November 2016, the Council provided a list of suggested witnesses to the Royal Commission. Many of those individuals had been identified and approached by the Royal Commission.
82. On 22 December 2016, the Royal Commission received a written submission from the Council that addressed matters identified in the Issues Paper and in the Royal Commission's May correspondence.
83. This hearing will be conducted over three weeks. Witnesses will generally give evidence in panels. Each witness has been selected in consultation with the Council.
84. In August last year, the Chair of the Royal Commission invited Cardinal O'Malley and another member of the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, Professor Sheila Baroness Hollins to give oral evidence by video link at this hearing.
85. Each declined the Chair's invitation to give oral evidence, preferring to rely on a submission prepared by Baroness Hollins about the work of the Pontifical Commission and her opinion on factors that may have contributed to the occurrence of or affected the response to child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions. The submission will be tendered.
86. In October 2016 we spoke with the United States' Executive Director Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection, Deacon Bernard Nojadera. He was later invited to give evidence and accepted that invitation.

87. Deacon Nojadera informed the Royal Commission on 25 January 2017 that he was no longer able to participate in the hearing. He declined our offer to have him give evidence by video link and declined to provide a signed statement.
88. On 27 July 2016, Dr Marie Keenan was invited to give oral evidence at this hearing. She has conducted and reported on her research into issues related to child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church. She accepted the invitation and confirmed her willingness to appear and give evidence by video link.
89. Dr Keenan provided a precis of the evidence she would give to the Royal Commission on 31 January 2017
90. On 2 February 2017, Dr Keenan advised that she did not believe that the forum of the Royal Commission is the correct one to do justice adequately to the research she has done and to all parties involved.
91. Shortly, I will read sections of the precis of the evidence Dr Keenan provided. The full precis will be available on the website this afternoon.
92. During the first week of the hearing the Royal Commission will hear evidence about structural, governance and cultural factors that may have contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse at Catholic Church institutions in Australia, or affected the institutional response of Catholic Church authorities in Australia to child sexual abuse. The secrecy requirements and the operation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be considered.

93. Dr Gerry O’Hanlon SJ is a member of the Society of Jesus – the Jesuit order. He will give evidence by video link from Dublin and the Royal Commission will sit on Wednesday night to accommodate the time difference.
94. Also in this week there will be evidence about approaches adopted or considered in Ireland about child safety, complaint handling and risk management in the Catholic Church.
95. During the second week of the hearing there will be evidence about the formation of clergy and religious and the professional support and supervision of clergy and religious. Child safety, complaint handling and the risk management practices of Catholic Church authorities in Australia, issues in Catholic education and the operation of Catholic community and social services will be examined.
96. The third week of the hearing will commence with a panel comprising Archbishop Coleridge and the Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Council outlining the establishment and proposed purpose of Catholic Professional Standards Limited. The evidence of a number of regional bishops will be heard, followed by the provincials of the main male religious orders and the Sisters of Mercy.
97. The hearing will conclude with a panel of five metropolitan archbishops of Australia. There will be evidence about their response to issues raised in Royal Commission reports, as well as to data relating to the extent of claims of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and in their diocese. Their current policies and procedures will also be canvassed.
98. Before each substantive topic is addressed by a panel, I will provide an introduction in relation to that topic.

99. This hearing has been structured to allow sufficient time to deal with the issues raised by the Council in its communications with us, to properly consider the results of the data project undertaken with the assistance of the Council and each of the dioceses and orders which participated, to examine the issues raised with the Royal Commission by the dozens of submissions received to the Issues Paper and to hear from as many priests and religious as is necessary. In total, over the half the witnesses to be called are priests or religious with most others employed by or working directly with the Church or on Church related matters.
100. It is hoped that the hearing can be completed in less than the time allocated, however, it is important for the Commissioners to have a complete understanding of the issues and for the Church, through the Council, to be given all the time it needs to put its position to the Commissioners.
101. I understand that the Council wishes to make an opening to provide its perspective on the issues to be discussed in this hearing. Time has been made available for that to occur.

Gail Furness SC

Stephen Free

Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission

6 February 2017