ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Public Hearing - Case Study 50 (Day 252)

Level 17, Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place, Sydney

On Tuesday, 21 February 2017 at 10am

Before:

The Chair: Justice Peter McClellan AM
Before Commissioners: Justice Jennifer Ann Coate
Mr Bob Atkinson AO APM
Mr Robert Fitzgerald AM
Professor Helen Milroy
Mr Andrew Murray

Counsel Assisting: Ms Gail Furness SC
Mr Stephen Free
MS FURNESS: Your Honour, today's panel is a number of bishops who, generally speaking, represent areas which are smaller than the metropolitan bishops.

THE CHAIR: Generally speaking?

MS FURNESS: Well, I didn't want to offend Archbishop Porteous of Hobart, so I put it in those terms, your Honour.

<ANTOINE-CHARBEL TARABAY, sworn: [10.04am]
<CHRISTOPHER ALAN SAUNDERS, sworn: [10.04am]
<VINCENT LONG VAN NGUYEN, sworn: [10.04am]
<DANIEL EUGENE HURLEY, sworn: [10.04am]
<JULIAN CHARLES PORTEOUS, sworn: [10.04am]
<CHRISTOPHER CHARLES PROWSE, sworn: [10.04am]

<EXAMINATION BY MS FURNESS:

MS FURNESS: Archbishop Prowse, could you tell us your full name?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: I'm Archbishop Christopher Charles Prowse.

MS FURNESS: You're Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: The Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn and the Apostolic Administrator for the Wagga Diocese.

MS FURNESS: You were ordained as a priest in the Archdiocese of Melbourne in August 1980?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct.

MS FURNESS: Since that time, you have been an auxiliary bishop in that archdiocese?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct.

MS FURNESS: And in June 2008 you were appointed the
Bishop for the Diocese of Sale?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct.

MS FURNESS: You held that position until you took up your current position as archbishop in 2013?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct.

MS FURNESS: Your archdiocese is what size?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: There's 56 parishes. It's geographically a very big diocese. It incorporates colonial, I suppose you could say, or farming areas, then goes down to coastal areas, the alpine region of Australia and also some of the big wheat and wool areas like Yass and Goulburn.

MS FURNESS: You have 50-odd schools in your area?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, 56 schools. Half of them are in the Australian Capital Territory and the other half are in regional New South Wales.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Now, what engagement does your archdiocese have these days with children?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: We have an engagement with the children when they come to us particularly at schools. Clearly we educate a very substantial percentage of the schools in the whole region; they're not all Catholic. People would choose the Catholic school. Our engagement with them is through their teachers and through the activities. Then, of course, with children in our parishes, there would be youth groups; those that come to the mass on Sunday in family groups. So across the board, there would be children - family groups, because of our commitment to marriage and family life. So it's quite a universal spread.

MS FURNESS: Are you funded to deliver services other than in relation to education?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: We are involved also with CatholicCare, we call it, which is social welfare. Then there's Marymead, which is for children particularly, and that is both is funded by governments and also by local
fundraising and Church funding as well.

MS FURNESS: Tell us about Marymead.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Marymead is an agency of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn which particularly cares for children. There's orphanages and foster families. There's outreach to the community in that particular area.

MS FURNESS: So orphanages are run through --

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Well, orphanages, as such, no, they are not there. But the foster families and what have you, I suppose, is better to call them, linking up with foster families, households, so the children are given safe places in that setting.

MS FURNESS: So I take it from your description that the vast majority of children who come into contact with your archdiocese are through schools?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. You have provided a statement, archbishop.

Your Honour, it might be appropriate at this stage to tender the volume of statements as one.

THE CHAIR: We'll make that exhibit 50-009.

EXHIBIT #50-009 VOLUME OF STATEMENTS

MS FURNESS: Do you have a copy of that with you?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: I have my statements, yes.

MS FURNESS: Just dealing firstly with the one which is dated 4 November.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct, yes.

MS FURNESS: Are the contents of that true and correct?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct, yes, it is.
MS FURNESS: Thank you. You indicate in your statement - this is at paragraph 8 - that you established in September 2015 the Institute for Professional Standards and Safeguarding?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct.

MS FURNESS: What prompted the establishment of that body?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Probably three factors. The first factor was that I was new to the archdiocese. I felt that coming in new as an archbishop, it would be important for me to review that which had already taken place by my predecessor. I think it's healthy to have a full review. I asked people outside the diocese, from the national committee, to come in and do a review. That happened. Their major suggestion was that we should have a whole-of-archdiocese approach.

The second factor would have been that particularly here, the Royal Commission - I was made the archbishop whilst the Royal Commission had already been going for about a year. I was listening very carefully. I was trying to respond as I could dynamically to that which was being revealed here, and very grateful to the Royal Commission for opening up the areas where we in the Catholic Church have somewhat - we needed to have a mirror placed in front of us, which I think the Royal Commission has done and will do, which I think is very important for us.

Thirdly, my own personal experience, too. I've been with victims and their families over the years in the different dioceses I've been in. There are obviously individual stories, but there was a commonality, almost, I'd say, demand, from the victims which resonates deep in my heart, basically saying, "Will you please listen to us and believe our story." Secondly, "Can you assure us that that person who abused me is no longer in the employ of the Church?" Thirdly, "Can you provide some practical help to me because I have an open wound that will not heal, and I need some practical compensation; I need some counselling." Fourthly, "Can we trust you? Can you assure us that the Catholic Church now and in the future is different to that which it was in the past, particularly with the relationship to children, with safeguarding of children?"
So those factors all came together when I first arrived, and it has made it such a priority in my governance of the diocese ever since and will in the future.

MS FURNESS: How does the establishment of that institute satisfy those various matters you described?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: It satisfies it in the following manner. First of all, I’m taking greater responsibility. Before, it was rather diffuse. I wasn’t really sure what was going on. It was delegated to different agencies, which were all doing a very good job, but I felt that there should be a coming together so that I could take a greater sense of ownership and responsibility and know what’s happening and monitor it. So I needed some institute that would do that.

Also, the educative dimension is very important to me. Certainly responding to allegations that come up promptly and professionally, and working in with government agencies, which I’ve tried to sophisticate in recent times. But also to be able to go ahead with programs, protocols, safeguarding - to oversee that, and also get particularly lay people in, who have great expertise in this matter, so that I can work in with them and not become some sort of solitary figure making decisions from on high. But there is a determination in me to work with the competent people, mainly lay people, to be able to change the culture, greater transparency and accountability for what’s happening, and to be able to do that in the public forum in this tragic moment, this chilling moment, of the Catholic Church with these statistics coming out, particularly in the last few weeks, which have chilled us to the core, and me personally. It has been heartbreaking to see these statistics nationally, but at the very same time to be able to say, well, let us go forward in a completely different way that is a way that we can hold our head up high and be able to say we’re learning from this. We have a long way to go, but we’re on the way. I feel that this institute represents all that.

MS FURNESS: The institute is a combination of your CatholicCare organisation?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, it’s a central body. It employs
some people there who then audit, monitor, working with
these agencies --

MS FURNESS: Perhaps if I can stop you there. As
I understand it, establishing that institute was to bring
together areas within the archdiocese that generally
delivered services to children?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: And what were those agencies, or what are
those agencies?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: First of all, the biggest one is
Catholic Education. Then there's the CatholicCare, the
Marymead. There's the congregational schools which run
their own national responses, but I still want to know
what's happening and to be informed and to monitor that.
Then, of course, our parishes and particularly our priests
and those that work with children, to ensure that all their
Working With Children Checks are there, up to date; that
when we do get complaints, they're handled professionally
and in a way that is not in any way, shape or form victims
feeling fobbed off; and to work particularly with the
ombudsman and the police at times, to work in together.

I'd say we're on the way. We have a long way to go,
but I think we're moving in the right direction.

MS FURNESS: So the effect of amalgamating, if I can use
that word, those agencies under the institute - is that,
subject to the various legislative requirements, there's
a commonality of approaches?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Two points, if I might. The first
one, "amalgamation" is a rather strong word. I want to
deleate responsibly. I feel that's the word that I would
use.

Secondly, working in with the agencies and the
government agencies. There's still a long way to go there.
For instance, my archdiocese straddles two governmental
constituencies - New South Wales and ACT - and with my
brother bishops from New South Wales, some time ago, we
wrote to the New South Wales Government wanting the
reportable conduct policies to make sure they include all
religious - that's there - but there's slightly different
legislation in the ACT and I have, with one of the
survivors of sex abuse that we're working with on our
consulting - we're now petitioning and have been
petitioning the ACT Government to raise the bar on the
reportable conduct policies to be equated with New South
Wales.

New South Wales, I think, has a high standard. I'd
like not to straddle two constituencies that are different
on this. I want there to be a consistency on both. So
I've been trying to respond as best I can to those issues
as they arise.

MS FURNESS: I think the Bill has been passed, hasn't it,
in the ACT?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: It's on the way. I think it's July
this year, but, you know, there are still some amendments
and finetuning I'd like to do to make sure that we really
do have a consistency. I don't want to be running an
agency of child protection in the Catholic Church, in my
archdiocese, where we have all these sort of hoops to go
through to say, well, New South Wales says this, but ACT
says that.

I would think also, just off the top of my head, too,
that this is a big issue nationally, too; that we have the
state and the national governments having consistent
policies which are of a very high standard, but I just have
to say that I don't have much to prove that, but I get the
sense that what's happening in my part might be symptomatic
of what's a challenge today nationally.

MS FURNESS: You have said that the creation of the
institute has resulted in more transparency?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Is it the case that there is more information
or decisions that are being made public that weren't
before?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, our protocols - I'm just thinking
of the website, I'm thinking of people's access to our
policies which are there, updating them continually, moving
them from draft to policy --
MS FURNESS: Archbishop, what's different from before you brought together those agencies into the institute?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Things like access to - how do I make a complaint, how did I do it, where are the documents?

MS FURNESS: That wasn't available before?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: It was, but it was hard to find. Now it's easy to find. It's easy to find on the website, so people can access it electronically or contact us. I want to make it easy for very vulnerable people who have a story to tell and who come from an experience, many of them, in the past where they felt that the Church wasn't taking moral responsibility. Many of them had been very happy, but some of them are saying, "Listen, we had to stand behind a whole barrage of lawyers to get to you, to the ear of the bishop." So I want to be able to change that culture and I'm trying my best to do that, with great expertise of laypeople.

MS FURNESS: Do you publish statistics now that you didn't publish before the institute was established?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: That's something that I'd like to do, actually, as a consequence of these sessions here. When I go back to my archdiocese, I have it in my heart to go around to the dioceses in regional areas for listening sessions. I want to gather the victims and their families. I mean, it's been like a bushfire going through the Catholic Church, or a tsunami effect, on faith and on people's trust of us. And I don't want to be sort of seen as some bureaucrat behind an office. So I want to go out and - I find the victims I've met over the years - I call them wounded healers. I don't think we can go ahead without the wounded healers standing alongside us, walking together, correcting us, directing us, working in with us. That's what I want to do, because there's huge wisdom already there.

Indeed, it's part of our Catholic culture to be alongside the periphery, the vulnerable, the children. When I read those statistics and the average age was only 11 --

MS FURNESS: But, archbishop, the Church has had procedures in place for 20 years to deal with this.
ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Your evidence is suggesting that it's a very recent phenomenon.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Well, it is recent in the sense that I think it's not as in-house as perhaps it might have been when Towards Healing first came along. But now we're talking about working immediately with the ombudsman, for instance. When a reportable offence or allegation is given, immediately we're tick-tacking with the local ombudsman and that helps --

MS FURNESS: That's because you have to, archbishop. You're required by law to do that.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, but it's a law that I not only support but I'm trying to promote even more so in the ACT so that it becomes a knee-jerk reaction, that the Church is not working on its own; it's working with the governmentalities of the time.

And I'm really looking forward to the recommendations from the Royal Commission, so that these doors will be opened even further. I'm looking forward to that. But at the same time I'm putting together a structure which I hope has a lot of open doors and open windows and is quite a dynamic one. It's not a closed shop. I feel also it's not just the change of policy but it's also the change of hearts and minds - this is a big issue as well.

THE CHAIR: Archbishop, it no doubt is in your thinking, and indeed all of you who are here today, and others, that the Church has had to confront, at least as you put it, in the last few weeks, the horror of what has actually occurred. There will be many people who will wonder why it was that it took a Royal Commission for the Church to come to confront its own reality, a reality which, at least in part, must have been known to many people in leadership and other positions for many years.

Because it has taken the Church so long and, indeed, it has been led to confront the issue, I assume that all of you are conscious that the credibility in the public mind has suffered an enormous blow. And there will be those who say to the Church, "Well, you say all these good things now..."
that you've been confronted with your own reality. How is it that we can accept what you say?" What are the signs that people should understand that what you are saying is that the Church accepts its own reality and is prepared to make the changes, some of which, as you know, have already been discussed during the course of this hearing?
What do you say, and what ultimately do all of you say, to the community?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Your Honour, I think we start by getting on our knees and saying we're profoundly and deeply sorry it has taken the genius of the Royal Commission to put a mirror in front of us in a prophetic way to say, "You're not doing what your mission says you are to do and you are not even doing what are basic requirements of Australia." So there's a massive failure in our mission in this particular regard, particularly to vulnerable people, children, young children. That's the first point I would want to make, is that we have messed up. We've done wrong. We're not being contrite in a superficial way. I can't think of another area of Church life, over the years that I've been involved with the Catholic Church in leadership, that has struck the inner core of us.

The second thing is it's not enough to just say sorry. We are people who say we are sorry and we will try not to sin again. So the second part is to genuinely work in with the Royal Commission and the new world that is now opening up to assure people that things are becoming different. That's not saying that we've already arrived there, but we must be able to work more transparently, with government agencies, to share what's going on in us, not to be so in-house, not to sort of think that we're some sort of bubble in an environment separated or on another orbit from the orbit of Australia. Coming together on this is something that is a present and future challenge.

So I can only really say that, your Honour, heartfelt - the sorrow and the determination to move on from here with the help of others.

THE CHAIR: One of the issues that has surfaced in the course of the recent hearing, which is repeated over and over again, is the issue of clericalism.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.
THE CHAIR: The special place that has been given to the priest, which has provided the power and the access to children, with the tragedies that have occurred. Now, you can imagine that many people reading about this Commission and watching the screen will be asking the question: well, what are you going to do about clericalism? Do you have an answer to that question?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Globally I would say that clericalism is the abuse of power. I mean, every time we Christians talk about power, it's for service. Now, it has been subverted through all sorts of reasons, in some cases, not to serve but to thwart, and thwart the most vulnerable. This is the tragedy. This is the incredible tragedy.

Now, how has that happened? We need to be able to look at that further and further. I would have thought in regard to seminary training and also after a priest is ordained that we're beginning to put in a different mindset, to be able to weed out those who are attracted to ministry because it gives them some sort of power to be held in awe by others. So there's a psychological component here, a way of screening people. There's also a way of monitoring them over a period of time.

But I would have thought that that's a way to start, to sort of basically define what it is and then say, "Well, listen" - it's a bit like, if I could use the word, "sin", which is the word we use; it's an offence here. But it's a social, it's a structural aspect of the sin. It's a dis-ease, as it were. Clericalism is a dis-ease or an abuse of that which is precious and can bring about our missionary and our religious aims. But the religious aim is cut off, and when that's cut off, all of a sudden you open yourself up for people who are - what is their intention? Why are you involved in children's ministries and what have you? So that's where we have to have proper screening and proper education in this to be able to work on this problem in a more focused manner.

THE CHAIR: Some would describe clericalism as the culture that the Church nurtured that put the priest on a pedestal, with the consequence that laypeople - particularly, in what we've seen many, many times, it's the mother of the child who has absolute trust in the priest, because that's the way the priest is represented in the Church community, and...
of course that trust is breached. It's that sort of, as it were, base level of culture that is often identified as being the problem with clericalism. How do you address that?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, I think it's very true, your Honour, what you're saying. In fact, when talking to victims over the years, that is precisely what has happened, that the incredible trust given has been abused by, for instance, the priest.

How do we move on from that? Well, I think we've got to start with those knocking at the door of the seminary. It has to start right there. There is a certain pathology to the paedophilia that we're now aware of. Move away from just a moral indiscretion; it's certainly that, but we've moved on from that. But the pathology of it, the grammar, the chemistry of paedophilia is something we're becoming more and more aware of. So therefore, once knowing the disease, the medicine to eradicate that becomes a little bit more obvious.

I think sometimes the medicine offered was not really based on a proper diagnosis. This is where I think we've been able to defer to the social sciences, the psychologies, the expectations in the corporate world about these. The monitoring of these things can be very, very helpful to us. So it's a long-term chapter I think we're now moving into, moving away from a naivety, perhaps, in this area before.

Might I say, though, on the other hand, I think, for instance, in seminary training, it's quite different now than it was, say, in the 1950s and 1960s, quite different. The movement of laypeople into the mix, especially in parish settings where there are focus groups with families, intelligent, prudent laypeople, coming to be able to help us to monitor possible future priests is a plus, and these issues of lording it over, a clerical approach, can be monitored a lot more - I think a lot more quickly than in times past. I think that's a positive way on a long journey ahead.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Can I just return and follow on from the Chair's earlier question about how the community can trust and believe that the Church is genuine in its mission of change. Am I right in perceiving, archbishop, that you
personally had no real appreciation of the scale and nature
of what had happened in the Catholic Church in Australia
with respect to the volume of child sexual abuse and the
numbers of perpetrators within the Church? Did that come
as a surprise to you?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Well, Commissioner, the data that the
Royal Commission has more recently given us in these weeks
is the first time I've seen creditable data nationally, and
it has shocked me personally.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Was it a surprise when you first saw
it?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes. To get a national portrait of it
and the huge numbers, you know, the thousands, and to
know --

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: The point to my question is this:
one thesis is that the culture of secrecy and of cover-up
dictated from the Vatican downwards has meant that bishops
themselves in each of their dioceses have been isolated
from true knowledge. If that thesis is accurate, it means
that one of the motives - or, sorry, one of the mechanisms
for change must surely be much stronger demand for internal
accountability and external transparency by the Church, and
I did not hear that in your answer to Justice McClellan's
question.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Thank you for bringing that up,
Commissioner, because I would want to validate exactly what
you said then. I mean, we do need to have - if I can go
back to my image of this being a disease or a scourge, we
do need to have national, international, local data on it
so that we can see that which is in front of us, and to
have that as a starting point to see, well, if that's the
illness, if that's the scourge, what should the medicine
be?

I think that which you've just mentioned there is
helpful in the sense that the protocols, the way of looking
at this disease, the way of moving forward, must be, first
of all, predicated by the fact that we, as it were, know
the beast, rather than to dim it down and say, "Oh, well,
this is just a passing phase" or "This was just an
indiscretion on a local level", but know that it's
something far greater than that.
I think the Royal Commission has really helped us -
forced us - to see this in a way that is painful but
I think ultimately helps us on the road to doing something
really helpful about it and moving on from there.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Attached to that question of mine is
a question to you as to whether you, personally, and you
believe your colleagues, understand that cover-up, secrecy,
poor institutional response, in fact does far more damage
to the Church and has been a thoroughly damaging approach -
is that understood in the change that you're instituting?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, I believe it is understood here
in Australia more and more. We're really talking about
a double affliction, a double - the perpetrator afflicting
the innocent one and then, secondly, a regenerating or the
removal - the forcing, again, of that person to feel
a victim when they face the Church rather than as a wounded
healer coming towards us. Often many have said, "Yes,
we've been very happy with the Church's response", but too
many have said, indeed, that they were victimised again by
an uncaring wall of the institutional Church, which of
course very much bishops must take responsibility for.

So in what I'm suggesting, with the institute, I want
to make a very honest and fresh beginning to say, no,
I will not hide myself behind the walls. I want to be able
to work in an interdisciplinary way with not only Church
people but also those governmental ones - ombudsman,
police - to be able to respond to this.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: What we are discussing are really
the systems of the Church which have resulted in secrecy
and cover-up. As I understand the Catholic Church's system
of appointment, a bishop, such as you, an archbishop, is
directly responsible to the Pope. Do you have the courage
to say to the Pope and the Vatican, "No more secrecy, no
more cover-up. Much more transparency. Much more internal
and external accountability"? Is that change there in your
heart?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Commissioner, in regard to the
appointment of a bishop, is that --

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: No, no, I'm talking in regard to the
issue of child sexual abuse.
ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: You see, what prevailed were secrecy, cover-up and poor process, which has damaged the Church.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: You're responsible to the Pope. Do you have the courage to say to whoever the Pope is, "No more of that"?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: I certainly - if I had the opportunity, most certainly, and certainly to the Pope's representative here in Australia, the Nuncio. Yes, this is where we need to move in this direction, and I believe Pope Francis is hearing this, and I can see that some of his even more recent statements and the setting up of international structures now are beginning to move in this direction of greater accountability.

He describes the sex abuse as the sin that shames us all, and I think that that's a good way of offering what the Church is saying at the moment and moving into a greater openness, to be able to respond to this scourge in our midst and to do something that would really turn the tide, and if that means the secrecy aspects need to be looked at more seriously, certainly. But exactly what that word "secrecy" means would need to be worked out at different levels.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Well, in your language, it means that the issue has been kept in-house until recent years.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: I think in regard to what's happening now, yes, I concede it's a big difference. I think the gravity of the sex abuse is really starting to dawn on us, and we can see that, no, no, we simply don't have the resources on our own to be able to cope properly with this. And even if we did, it's not appropriate. The days of us just in-house looking at these issues on our own - those days are gone. Apart from that, the government structures that are up now and the legislation, which is very helpful, helps us to say - I, as archbishop, for instance, can't be making unilateral decisions about these matters without going to these other instrumentalities and
working through it in that way.

MS FURNESS: Archbishop, you have given evidence of wanting to, and, indeed, having walked with victims and heard what they've had to say.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: But isn't it as recent as last November that you were invited to a healing ceremony at the Marist Brothers college or school and you refused to go?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Well, that was a mistake on my part. I had a perspective of waiting till the Royal Commission concludes here and then, as the bishop looking after the entire archdiocese, to begin walking with the sex abuse victims and their families, listening to them and then working towards some sort of appropriate liturgy, perhaps a liturgy of lament. But I was then corrected by the victims, and they lamented that I wasn't there.

I thought about it, and I agreed with them. I made a public apology and asked for forgiveness for that. It was a mistake on my part. I had more of a diocesan perspective rather than just the local one.

MS FURNESS: It was a very recent mistake, if I can suggest that, archbishop.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: And somewhat at odds with the evidence you're giving about how you have learnt from the Royal Commission, which has now been sitting for four years, and are taking a more survivor-oriented approach. What do you say about that?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, I agree with you, it was a mistake and I made a public apology and I regret that and am sorry for it.

MS FURNESS: What are you sorry for?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: That I didn't attend. I didn't attend that ceremony.

MS FURNESS: Have you since attended something similar?
ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Well, I have with families, yes, but not in a public - not in a public way. Yes, when I've been with families, at the resolution of that, yes, there has been the lament, and that's an important aspect at that time.

MS FURNESS: In your archdiocese, since you've been in the position, has there been any public gathering or occasion upon which you've given your comments or thoughts in relation to child sexual abuse?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: In written form, yes, and with my Church gatherings, yes, yes, with my priests and with people and in deanery assemblies, yes, I bring it up very often.

MS FURNESS: But in terms of a public forum for that purpose?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: That to me is the next step which I want to do. I feel the confessing - it's still the time for the confessing and the bringing of that out. From that, I would like to think that we can then move to more of a liturgical response.

But I have been in public forums, yes, on the ecumenical dimension. Yes, there was a very big public forum at Parliament House there recently on an ecumenical level and I was with ecumenical leaders from Canberra. But it wasn't a Catholic Church one.

So the answer to your question is, no, I haven't, on the Catholic Church aspect, in public forum - looking forward to doing that. Yes, I have done that in the ecumenical dimension on a public level.

MS FURNESS: When you say you're looking forward to doing it, what's stopping you?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: As I mentioned, I wanted the stories to come out, which are coming out still, even now, you know, through the Royal Commission - more and more victims are coming forward. When will that decrease? I don't know. But once, I think, the Royal Commission finishes, to me, it's a bit of a - one chapter ends and one chapter is about to begin. So I would like to think that would be the
appropriate time.

Maybe I'm wrong on that, and I'm happy to revise that opinion, but there is something in my mind that tends to think that a gathering together for a more prayer-focused apology is perhaps - from a whole archdiocese is on the way, but I would like to get to engage more and more with groups of victims, to be able to walk them towards that, rather than, as it were, parachuting into a liturgy and then sort of to be, in that sense, just a bit thin on, in my mind, at any rate.

MS FURNESS: You would understand, wouldn't you, that there would be those in your archdiocese who would say that you have had years to walk with them and that you have had years, particularly during this Royal Commission, to hear their stories, and therefore why are you still waiting to take the step you've referred to?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Well, I have seen victims one for one, in small groups, families, and what have you. But collectively in bigger groups, not yet, but I want to do that.

MS FURNESS: The data you referred to before would have told you that in the Diocese of Sale, where you were bishop for a time, 15.1 per cent of priests were identified as having claims made against them. You understand that?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: And that's over double what was the average.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes. I was very surprised to see that huge statistic.

MS FURNESS: Can you help us with how that might have happened in that diocese?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Well, we're going back to 1950. I don't have the statistics on me, but I know that there were some priests there, there were multiple instances there, and I really - I was surprised with that huge statistic and would want to look at it more fully to see how that is the case, yes.

But whilst I was there, I was quite happy with the way
that we were able to set up structures whereby, when cases came towards us, we were able to respond to them. Yes, again, it's a tragedy, it's a tragic statistic.

MS FURNESS: You can't help us any more on your thoughts as to why it might have happened in that diocese where you were bishop for a time?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, I would have thought that there seemed to be, in some areas of the Diocese of Sale, perhaps more so than in a big city, an extraordinary trust of the local priest, whereby he was able to really become part of the family in a way that perhaps wouldn't have been so in a bigger city. We're talking about regional areas.

I think that was a breeding ground for immature and disconnected priests to be able to move into that area perhaps more so numerically than in a bigger city, where getting to know the priest is not as easy as in a country area where the priest knows everybody, everybody's name. I would have thought that would be something that struck me as one possibility to think about.

MS FURNESS: And what do you do in your current archdiocese to ensure that that access is lessened or, in some way, mitigated in order for the abuse not to occur?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Well, first of all, I think the scrutiny of the priests; the Working With Children Check; a more vigorous professional standards in-servicing of priests and Church employees; a greater awareness of the situations that people ought avoid or making sure that there are other adults there. These are things that I think are helpful at the present moment.

MS FURNESS: I think you've also found chapter 16A helpful, of the New South Wales child protection legislation, which enables you to exchange information with other agencies?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, yes, I think that's very helpful and there's a greater way of being able to see what's happening, to work together, so it's a better situation where I'm forever working in a team in this area rather than just on my own.

MS FURNESS: And you can't do that in the Australian
Capital Territory, can you?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, I can, but I want to do it in a way that's consistent with New South Wales, where I think the bar is higher. I want to raise the bar and encourage the ACT to be consistent with the New South Wales one.

MS FURNESS: So I take it you would be in favour of an information exchange regime like there is in New South Wales throughout Australia?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: I would, and I'd encourage it.

MS FURNESS: Mandatory reporting for priests varies around Australia, with the Northern Territory having all adults required to report to child protection authorities. What's your view on whether priests should be required to report risk of harm or significant risk of harm of children to the child protection authorities?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: I'm very sympathetic to it. Of course, that's bringing up the issue of the confessional seal, which I notice has been a topic here over these weeks. But, yes, I think to do something where - this is happening already with the schoolteachers already, in a teaching setting. Therefore, the door should be open to dialogue in regard to extending that.

MS FURNESS: Well, I'm opening the door to dialogue with you, archbishop. What's your view?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: I think it's a good idea. I think I would need to, again, discuss that, precisely what the legislation might mean, what it would include and what it would not include, but I think that would be a pathway that I think would be very positive.

MS FURNESS: Just finally, archbishop, you'll understand that the Commonwealth has responded to the Royal Commission's recommendation for a national redress scheme?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: And as far as one currently knows, there may well be provision for individual dioceses, like yourself, to opt in to it.
ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Have you given thought to that?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, I have, and we would opt in to it, very positively.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Can I turn to you, Archbishop Porteous. You have provided a statement to the Royal Commission?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: That's correct, yes.

MS FURNESS: And your statement is dated 6 October 2016?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: That's correct, yes.

MS FURNESS: Are the contents of that true and correct?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: They are.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Now, archbishop, you were originally ordained as a priest of the Archdiocese of Sydney in 1974?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: That's correct, yes.

MS FURNESS: And became an auxiliary bishop in September 2003?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Correct.

MS FURNESS: And you were installed as Archbishop of Hobart in September 2013?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: That's correct, yes.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Now, in terms of your archdiocese's engagement with children, is it similar to your colleague, mainly in the education field?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes, mainly education. We have 16,000 children in our schools in Tasmania. The other area, of course, is CatholicCare, which is our social welfare agency. We run, for instance, preschool and out-of-school programs there, and obviously other areas of family counselling that may involve children as well. So
the main two agencies apart from the parishes would be Catholic Education and CatholicCare.

MS FURNESS: You may well have heard some evidence last week, archbishop, about formation and seminaries. Are you aware of that?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I am, yes.

MS FURNESS: There was evidence from a number of sources about a trend towards young seminarians wishing to revert and reverting to the old ways of undertaking their work. Are you aware of that evidence?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I am, yes, yes.

MS FURNESS: And evidence was given that young priests and seminarians were more inclined to wear the dress that's particularly associated with priests, the soutane, as well as wanting to revert to the liturgy in Latin and the like. Is that something that you yourself have observed?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I'll make a distinction between the time that I was rector of the seminary and currently. If I speak currently, firstly, I'm aware that that is a tendency around. I wouldn't say very clearly - it's not every seminarian. It's some who desire the more traditional expressions of priestly life and priestly garb, but it's certainly not universal. I have eight seminarians. It's not a factor among any of my seminarians.

MS FURNESS: Was it when you were rector?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Well, when I was rector - generally I'd say no. When I was rector of the seminary, one of the small things I did was looked at the question of modes of dress, and the thing I required of the seminarians was that they wear a collar, just an open-neck shirt collar, rather than a T-shirt or something; they wear trousers rather than shorts or jeans; they wear shoes rather than runners. So just to develop a more - I don't know what the right word is, but a basic standard of dress around the seminary, when they were going to lectures, and so on.

The only time we would wear the soutane would be at Sunday mass and also when we had major liturgical events.
So I didn't find any great issue with that. The seminarians accepted it; I think some were drawn a bit, but, generally speaking, that was the culture of the seminary.

MS FURNESS: And is it a culture that you believe is an appropriate one for the Church?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I think culture is a very important issue, and I think we've already had a discussion about the question of clericalism.

I think I'd make a distinction between, if you like, a priestly culture - just as any profession has a culture, so the legal profession has a culture, police, doctors, any profession, particularly those that are geared as professions to helping others, do have a certain culture which captures I think the highest ideals. So the pursuit of truth, the pursuit of justice; the care of the sick and suffering would be for doctors and nurses, and so on. So that every particular profession has ideals that motivate and inspire those who embrace the profession.

That's what I call the culture, and I think that's a very important thing and something we'd want to encourage. Certainly, as a rector of a seminary and certainly now as bishop, that's something I very much encourage - a positive culture for seminarians and for priests.

Where culture can break down is when, firstly, an individual fails to live up to its ideals, or, worse still, when somebody quite deliberately betrays the culture. As you know, in many other professions we have various programs where people can be taken - disciplinary boards, and so on, where people can then be disciplined by their peers when they're not measuring up to the ideals of the culture.

So clericalism is the abuse of the priestly culture, where there is a focus on maybe standing, status; a focus on maybe demanding certain things. I'd say that's an abuse of the priestly spirit, the priestly culture.

MS FURNESS: Is it your view that the tsunami, as it has been described, of child sexual abuse within the Church is largely a product of the acts of individuals?
ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Largely the acts of individuals? Could you explain that?

MS FURNESS: Well, those individuals who perpetrated the abuse and those individuals who failed to respond appropriately to the abuse - is that where you lay responsibility?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I would see clearly where somebody was a perpetrator of abuse that there were circumstances in their own life, their own mentality, their own understanding of sexuality, maturity, and so on - these were probably significant factors in influencing behaviour which was a betrayal of their priesthood, if we're talking about priests.

MS FURNESS: And do you see the structure and governance of the Church, indeed the culture of the Church, having any role to play in the extent of child sexual abuse by clergy and religious?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I think certainly my own experience has been that over the period of years - and we can probably go back to the 1990s when these issues started to seriously emerge - that we've all been on a process of learning and discovery, and this Royal Commission has highlighted things that, before, I hadn't given consideration to.

My own experience was one of learning and coming to understand things that I hadn't really understood before. I think the Church was in a similar situation. I think, firstly, the Church did not understand, did not understand, how much damage was done by sexual abuse.

MS FURNESS: In terms of your current views, do you see that there have been any structural or governance or cultural matters within the Church that must take some responsibility for the extent of child sexual abuse by clergy and religious?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I certainly think historically. I think now we are moving forward in a whole variety of ways, alerted to the issues so much more than we've ever been before, and this has been a very good thing.
MS FURNESS: What were the structural issues in the past, do you think, that played a role?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I think one thing very clearly was that nobody understood the seriousness of the effects of sexual abuse on children, and now I think, myself as a bishop, having met with a number of victims of sexual abuse, I've become acutely aware of the extraordinary harm and damage that has been done to people's lives, something I didn't personally understand before. I'm now acutely aware of it and acutely aware that this must completely be eradicated because of the extraordinary damage that's done.

THE CHAIR: Archbishop, counsel asked you about structural issues. It doesn't seem your response was a response to that question.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Okay. I might need some further clarification. I'm sorry, I didn't quite understand what you were asking.

MS FURNESS: Do you see that there was anything in the structure or the way in which the Church was governed that played a role in the extent of child sexual abuse by clergy and religious? You answered in respect of knowledge, not structure.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes, not structure. I see, I see. I think the structures - again, correct me if I'm not answering your question. Structures certainly relate to the lack of appropriate formation of candidates and the lack of understanding or action by the Church in appropriately responding when there were complaints coming forward. I don't know if that's answering it appropriately or not.

MS FURNESS: Was there anything, you think, to do with the autonomy of the bishop and the way in which power operated within the Church that played a contributing role?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: If I go back to what I was saying before about culture, power can be used for good, but power can also be misused, sometimes inadvertently. Sometimes somebody is not aware and acts inappropriately in a situation. I think that's what has happened in the past. I think as bishops, not being aware of the significance, we
didn't respond appropriately to issues as they came up. So I think we did fail because we weren't aware of the significance of what was taking place, particularly in the life of the victim, nor understanding the seriousness of the issues in the perpetrator.

There was a time when there was a view that a person could correct it or, with psychological help, overcome it. We've come to realise now, no, that's not possible, so --

THE CHAIR: Archbishop, you're still not addressing the question.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Sorry.

THE CHAIR: The question is: why did it happen in the first place?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Why did what happen, your Honour?

THE CHAIR: Why did priests abuse? It's not a question of what was the reaction of the Church once you knew that the priest was abusing, but why did priests abuse? Why did so many priests and religious abuse children? Are there structural reasons in the Church? That is the question you're being asked. Are there cultural reasons in the Church? Is there a failure to create a proper relationship between the clergy and religious and the lay members of the Church? These are the questions you're being asked to address, not how did the Church fail in its response, but why did it happen at all? Can you help us?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I'd like to. I do find it very difficult to be able to answer that question, that there was, particularly at some time historically, which was a little bit before my time, a time when this was happening at the rate it was. I don't understand enough of why that was the case.

Clearly there were issues related to the sense of identity of the priests that may have been a factor. I struggle to understand why it was so widespread, why there were so many priest perpetrators.

Were there structural things? There probably were, that didn't, as I would see now, effectively overcome the issue. What they were I find difficult to actually grasp.
MS FURNESS: It seems from your answer to that question and earlier questions, archbishop, that your view is that it was the responsibility and perhaps fault of individuals who perpetrated the abuse and individuals who responded inadequately to the abuse. Is that right?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: That's correct, but I did also mention that organisations have cultures, and there can be times when that culture is not working for the good of what the professional or particular organisation should be doing. Clearly there were some elements there. I can't quite identify them, but I think clearly there were factors there, and perhaps it had a lot to do with a sense of wanting the Church to be - we often talk about avoiding scandal. I think that was probably one issue, that we didn't want to inform more broadly the community of failures. That would be one thing.

THE CHAIR: Again, archbishop, that's addressing the issue after it happened. Can I put it on the table. We've had evidence that a contribution to this problem was made by the Church's requirement for celibacy of religious and priests. We have had over and over again people telling us it's clericalism. It's because the Church expressed a particular value in the clergy, which put them on a pedestal as against the layperson, distorted the culture of the Church. The whole power structure in the Church was altered to the detriment of children. Now, these are the issues that are on the table. Do you have any comment about any of these?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes, sorry, your Honour, the first point you raised was --

THE CHAIR: Celibacy. We have had evidence that it has made a contribution - it's not the cause but it has contributed to the problem. And you would understand that many, many people hold that view - perhaps uninformed, but nevertheless hold that view. The Church has to answer that question.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes. I understand that that's often what people say, that it's because of celibacy. I'm personally not convinced that celibacy per se is the issue. I think formation for people to live a celibate life is a very important aspect, so not celibacy as such but how...
people understand it and live it.

I'm aware that celibacy is not unique to the Catholic Church. Buddhism, for instance, has a strong tradition of celibate monks. So it is a feature of religious bodies.

THE CHAIR: We don't know anything about the behaviour of monks, though, you see.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: No, but if we say this is just a Catholic issue, celibacy, celibacy is more broadly --

THE CHAIR: That may be so, but that doesn't address the issue: has it contributed to the sexual abuse of children within the Catholic Church?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: My view is that some priests who have not adequately developed a mature approach to issues of sexuality, effective maturity, of ability to live a celibate life, have failed, and it has been a failure in their commitment to the ideals of the priesthood. I believe that it's not a sole determinant of this. It's to do more with the individuals and their maturity.

THE CHAIR: But if you were to take celibacy away and allow priests to marry, would that reduce the risk? That will be another question that people ask, bearing in mind that, as we understand it, not all Catholic religious or priests are celibate, openly or otherwise.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: The question of whether changing the Church's laws on celibacy would in fact be, in itself, a change in the possibilities of sexual abuse, I'm not sure; I'm not convinced that that would be the case. My view is that it has more to do with the appropriate formation of people in living the celibate life.

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: Could I just clarify, and Ms Furness has raised it, but it's quite significant. In the evidence given by Dr Marie Keenan at the beginning of this, and in the written evidence that we have before us, she says two things. I'll read them to you. She says:

By implication the assumption is that the sexual abuse of a child by Catholic clergy is the result of the individual pathology or predisposition - a theory that is
favoured by some men in leadership in the Catholic Church.

She then goes on to say these two things:

In order to understand clerical men who have sexually abused minors, one can come to no other conclusion but that their sexual offending must be understood within the unique context of their lives and ministries as Roman Catholic ministers within the Roman Catholic Church.

And later she says:

The features of the institutional Church that are said to contribute to a climate in which sexual abuse by Catholic clergy becomes possible include [a number of things] - the theology of sexuality, the ecclesiastical structure of power relations and hierarchical authority, clerical culture and seminary formation.

Are we to understand that you fundamentally, however, hold the first view, that at the end of the day the sexual abuse was fundamentally a failure of the individual, as Ms Furness has put to you, or do you accept the research and the evidence of people we've heard that, in fact, the unique features of the Catholic Church, multiple features, contributed to the offending within the Catholic Church? Do you accept that proposition, even if you have doubts about some of the elements of that?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I do. I would agree that these elements are factors that would come into play. They are factors I think we as bishops have become aware of and are seeking now to address in a variety of ways.

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: So if we move forward, archbishop, if you were to look at each element in and of itself and by itself, such as clericalism, such as celibacy, or any of the other matters that I've just outlined, one could argue effectively that none of those in and of themselves caused or contributed significantly.

But the argument that's being put and the evidence
that has been put by many people, including that which I've
just said, is that it is the combination of those factors,
each of which contributed variously, and therefore looking
at each element is in fact an impossible way to see this
problem and to resolve it. What do you think about that
proposition?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Again, I wouldn't dispute that. As
I said, it's not one element in itself, but a number of
elements can contribute, to a certain extent, to creating
a certain culture where that can take place. As
I mentioned before, these are things that we now have
greater clarity about and are seeking to address.

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: So just to take the point that
his Honour was raising in relation to celibacy, is the
Church willing to look at celibacy in the context of
a range of factors that have given rise to risks, given
rise to offences and given rise to poor responses, rather
than to look at each component as an isolated issue, in
which you might come to a very different answer than if you
were looking at them collectively, as the research
indicates that one should?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes, I'm sorry, I'm just --

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: Are you prepared to look at the
issues as a collective of issues rather than as each
separate item where you could come to a very different
view, if you looked at it in isolation of the other issues?
In other words, it's the whole rather than the individual
parts?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes, with the comment that if those
elements are being individually identified and we're
working towards - we're creating a different culture for
the future.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: You see, archbishop, what exercises
many minds is this, following on from that proposition: if
the past claims history provided to us by the Catholic
Church indicates that one in 14, or 7 per cent, of priests
engaged in sexual activity with children, and that
collective package of issues is not addressed, what is
there to reassure the community that, going forward, we
still don't have 7 per cent, or one in 14, priests who have
a sexual interest in children, and therefore the community
will feel unsafe in your Church? So that's the issue.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Sure.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: It's not about the past; it's about the package of things which creates this risk and makes the Church unsafe for children - has made it.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I fully understand, and I'd have to say very honestly that it will depend on our ability as a Church as a whole to come to terms with these various issues, both collectively and also look at them individually, to then take the necessary steps to ensure that that mix of things is changed, the culture is changed, to eliminate possibilities in the future.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: You see, we recognise that safeguarding children processes are better and opportunities have been reduced.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: So that side of it has been addressed. But we remain with the difficulty that the research and evidence provided to us shows that nothing overall has changed much in the Catholic Church institutional/structural set-up, and that's with regard to celibacy, formation, selection - there have been some changes perhaps in selection and formation, but not much in the other issues - and clericalism, and so on.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: If I may speak, I was rector of a seminary for seven years and now bishop of the diocese. One of the things that has been foremost in my own mind is seeking to create a positive environment for the priests, and particularly emphasising priestly fraternity, trying to work in a very positive way to create the healthiest environment for priests so that that can assist them in their own growth and maturity.

In the seminary, as I reflect back on what was fundamental in my own approach as rector, I think two words captured what I was trying to do. One was the word "service", that I kept many, many times saying to the seminarians, as I say now to priests, that their role is to serve, to try to break down any sense of prerogatives of power or influence or whatever, to say that we adopt the
attitude of being a servant. So I'm trying - doing that in
the seminary and also in my own diocese, to encourage that
attitude, which I think is a key attitude to having the
right dispositions of mind in our relationships with other
people.

The second quality I've often spoken about is the
importance of humility, and again this goes back to any
sense of authority or any rights or claims to anything that
might accrue by virtue of being a priest. One of the
things I've often encouraged in both seminarians and
priests are these sorts of qualities, which I'm hoping will
bring about a cultural change or advance the culture of the
priests in a healthy way to create a better environment
where some of these other cultural elements you mentioned
before won't be factors in priests failing in this area.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: I'm not sure - and I'll conclude on
this basis: I'm not sure that that will reassure those who
fear that that will not address the one in 14 chance of
somebody having a sexual interest in children. That's my
reaction to your reply.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Could I make one final comment, if
I may? Again, I'll go back to my time as rector,
particularly. It was one of the other areas that was of
paramount importance to me, particularly as I was rector
just after the revelations of the situation in Boston, and
that really focused my own attention on this area. So as
rector, I was very conscious to ensure that the seminarians
coming through developed and had a healthy maturity in the
sexual area so that we weren't having people come through
who had deficiencies that might later on find expression in
sexual abuse of minors. So I was very conscious of that
and did work and at times acted to ensure that candidates
coming through, as best I could, I felt that they had the
maturity, the sexual maturity, the effective maturity, to
be able to be good and effective priests.

THE CHAIR: How do you do that, archbishop?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: You do it, firstly - one of the
advantages - I know there has been some comment about the
structure of seminaries. One advantage, certainly in my
time in the seminary, was that I had a seminary of up to
about 40 students, and I was basically with them for
seven years over the bulk of each year. You see them in
all sorts of situations. You have a chance to really get to know them and other formation staff really get to know the students.

It's pretty hard - you know, somebody can come in and present in a certain way, but over time you get to see the true qualities of the person.

So one of the advantages of our seminary system is that you are able to have - those in key formational roles can have very close relationships with each of the students to assess their suitability, their growth, their development.

Now in the seminaries, there's a lot more focus given to goal setting and reflection at the end of the year. The formators would identify perhaps a personal issue, "Look, I think you need to work on this issue. Let's see how we go at the end of the year." So there's this --

THE CHAIR: Can I ask you to pause. How do you assess their sexual maturity? What do you do in order to satisfy yourself this person is, as you put it, sexually mature and won't be a problem?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Obviously my own growth and knowledge of that person is a key. The other thing obviously is if there were incidences that took place that caused you to have alarm in one way or another. So something may crop up, something may happen, and then you would - that would be a red flag and you would then look at it more carefully.

So we would do the best we could to observe, and if we were concerned about a particular student, something happened, then we would consult and address the issue.

THE CHAIR: Do you have any professional people carry out assessments?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I had a professional psychologist who was on call, and on a couple of occasions I asked students - obviously you have to respect their freedom - to say, "We think it would be good for you if you went along and spoke to the psychologist on this particular issue", and in some cases it worked very, very well, very helpful.
COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: Just related to that matter, you would have been aware of the evidence of Gerardine Robinson, where she indicated that for those that are going to violate boundaries, both with children and with adults, it's likely to happen around the time of ordination into the diaconate and within two years of the ordination of the priests. Indeed, her evidence was that it's very unlikely that you will pick up people at the beginning of the process.

If that evidence is correct, does it indicate that there is something missing in both seminary training and early ordainees, when they're out, that we need to look at as a Church, because if that is true, the efforts in the beginning to look at what's happening are important, but in fact are not the main time at which these behaviours, these boundary violations or abusive behaviours, become evident?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Certainly my own attitude is to ensure that a deacon or a newly ordained priest is placed with a very good priest in the parish. The normal practice would be that somebody would be assigned to a parish. One of the things that I do, I would speak to that priest fairly regularly, even if it's just to say, "How's the young fellow going? Any issues?", so I'd keep monitoring. Now, I can do that because I'm in a relatively small diocese, so it's not difficult for me to be able to monitor the young priests and to ensure that there are, again, no red flags, no issues emerging that we might need to address.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Archbishop, at that time when you were the rector, when the issues came out in Boston, it sounds as though you acted on your own initiative in terms of putting in place strategies in the seminary. Was there any support that you had or groundswell of concern in Tasmania, the Church hierarchy, or even throughout Australia, saying, "Well, here are the lessons of Boston, look what has happened there. We need to know what has happened here; we need to mitigate risk and do all we can" - was there any sense of that or were you on your own with that?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: At that stage I was in Sydney and the seminary was the Seminary of the Good Shepherd. It's hard to remember back exactly, but I do remember that those revelations had a very significant impact on me.
COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: So did you discuss that with anyone, the bishop or the archbishop?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I did discuss it. We discussed it with the formation staff and I think we were of a mind that we needed to take note of what had happened, and then I know personally I looked more seriously at what can we do to improve the formation in this particular area. So it did --

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Do you think perhaps it went beyond that, to, what do we have to do to ensure that what has happened in Boston isn't happening here?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: At that stage, I think my world, if you like, was the formation of men for the priesthood. That was my responsibility. So a lot of the focus - and at that point I wasn't a bishop; I was the rector of the seminary, so I put my focus very much on looking at the ways we could improve the formation of men in this area.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: And did you have a sense that in relation to the leadership of the Church at that time - because I imagine you at least engaged with the people running the other seminaries at that time?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: The seminary rectors had the practice of once a year coming together for a four- or five-day session with Australia and the Pacific. We all met together and normally had some in-service, if you like, lecturers would come in and give us talks, and these issues would have been discussed.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: The Boston issue?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes, I'm just trying to remember, but certainly - I mean, I was particularly interested in what Melbourne, which was the other large - the two large seminaries at that point were Sydney and Melbourne, so I was particularly interested in what Melbourne was doing and trying to learn from their approach.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Did you get a sense that that was at the level above the seminaries at the time; that concern about Boston was at a level of concern with the Bishops Conference, or can't you help us with that?
ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I couldn't answer that because I don't know what happened at the Bishops Conference. Certainly it occurred after the Church had been engaged in developing Towards Healing, and so forth, so the Church was aware of it. I suppose it came home to me very dramatically at a personal level at that time.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: It's pretty significant. You mentioned earlier culture and you talked about police, and starting in the late 1980s there were a number of corruption inquiries in relation to police departments throughout Australia. Some of the lessons there were that they were, at the time, largely male-dominated, hierarchical organisations, and the culture was so powerful that wrongdoing by police, who take an oath to protect the public and enforce the laws, was supported and acknowledged by others. Do you think there perhaps are parallels with what happened in the Church as well?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I think that's a very good instance. What the royal commissions did was highlight - again, if I can say, the culture basically is a good thing. We need cultures in various professions, and they should enshrine the highest ideals. But you can also have a situation where there's a serious corruption of that culture taking place, particularly maybe at leadership level or perhaps groups within it.

So I think that's something we have to be conscious of, too, and it could happen again. We need to say we must make sure that the culture of the priesthood is always set at the highest levels, and if there is betrayal of that culture, and particularly in an individual or maybe a certain attitude of being separated or having some sort of false approach to the culture, we need to deal with that and seek to eradicate it, because it is corrosive, it is damaging to the good of the profession, if I could use that as a whole.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Could I just ask you this, though. Probably in any occupation or profession there is a culture that, understandably, perhaps, might protect someone who's lazy or protect someone who is drinking to excess, but what we are talking about here is child sexual abuse, which is a serious crime. So would you agree that it must have been an incredibly powerful culture that protected child sexual
abuse?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: It was a strong culture, certainly, and a culture of, as we spoke about before, secrecy because of this whole idea of scandal; I think that was a driving influence.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: So coming back to the earlier discussions and his Honour's comments, what needs to be done now? What needs to be done now to ensure that everything possible is done to demolish that culture and build a new one?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Could I say that I think one thing that I think will emerge from this Royal Commission is that I think we need effective auditing of dioceses as we are seeking to implement various programs. I'm hoping that one of the fruits of the Royal Commission will be a sharpening of the particular questions that need to be asked, the particular issues that need to be addressed.

I think, if I could use the image - it's a little bit like a financial audit. You know, every year you're financially audited. It's a good thing, in the sense that you get to have a look and make sure all your programs and everything you do is correct and there are no faults or failings in your financial dealings.

In the same way, I see through developing of auditing of our processes, for me, that would give greater assurance, as a bishop, that we are not only doing it but continuing to maintain standards, and I'm hoping - I'm expecting, actually, that the first audits may bring up some things which we hadn't thought of or we weren't doing appropriately or effectively. So I'm hoping one of the great fruits of this Royal Commission will be that there will be auditing tools that will be more refined and more focused and we can then work with auditors to ensure that we establish the standards and then we maintain them over time. I think that's the key thing.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: I want to ask some questions afterwards of both yourself and Archbishop Prowse, just going back to the organisation that you have set up, or that entity, the Institute of Professional Standards, but perhaps we could come back to that.
MS FURNESS: Just one question, if I might, your Honour. Archbishop, you will understand that your Truth, Justice and Healing Council, of which you are a member, has described what happened as a massive failure of leadership. Do you accept that?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I accept that there was a failure in leadership based on a lack of understanding of the seriousness of sexual abuse and also a lack of understanding of how it should be developed, but particularly we should have more accountable systems of responding to sexual abuse. So there was a failure. It was grounded in some deficiencies in our understandings at that time.

MS FURNESS: So you don't accept that there was a massive failure of leadership?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I think the leadership --

MS FURNESS: The word "massive" is the one you objected to before by omitting it.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Okay, I would say there was great failure, massive failure, of leadership, but I would also say that it was for lack of awareness of the seriousness of child sexual abuse and the lack of the use of appropriate ways of dealing with it.

MS FURNESS: Effectively, ignorance of a few?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes, yes.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Your Honour, I notice the time.

THE CHAIR: Yes, we'll take the morning adjournment.

SHORT ADJOURNMENT

MS FURNESS: Your Honour, I can now move on to Bishop Hurley. Would you tell the Royal Commission your full name?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, Daniel Eugene Hurley.

MS FURNESS: And you're the Bishop of Darwin?
BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: What work did you do before becoming Bishop of Darwin?

BISHOP HURLEY: I was the Bishop of Port Pirie Diocese prior to that and a priest in that diocese prior to that.

MS FURNESS: You have provided two statements - one dated 14 October 2016?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: The contents of that are true and correct?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, they are.

MS FURNESS: And another one, dated 28 November 2016?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Bishop, recently, as recently as the end of January last year, you put out to all parish priests and principals of primary and secondary schools in Darwin a document about the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, I did.

MS FURNESS: You're familiar with the document I'm referring to?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, I am.

MS FURNESS: As part of that document, you referred to the current practice of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in schools taking place in a communal setting in the Church, in full view of all participants?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: And then you asked that it be done in a particular way. Can you describe that to us?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes. What I asked them to do, in essence, Ms Furness, was to at all times have line of sight, that there was never to be any situation where there could be any doubt about what was happening.
MS FURNESS: What prompted you to take that action last month?

BISHOP HURLEY: I think that it was a matter of giving reassurance to people, particularly people who attend our schools, who entrust us with the sacred trust of their children, that I should do everything and make sure that everybody else was doing everything that they could and should, in my opinion, to give parents absolute solace about the safety of their children, whether it was sacramentally or in the schoolyard or anywhere else.

MS FURNESS: Had any particular event been brought to your attention?

BISHOP HURLEY: No.

MS FURNESS: I tender that document, your Honour.

THE CHAIR: It will become exhibit 50-010.

EXHIBIT #50-010 DOCUMENT CIRCULATED BY BISHOP HURLEY IN RELATION TO THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

MS FURNESS: It's the case, I think, that what you have said to your priests in that document is consistent with canon law?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Now, bishop, you have provided a statement in which you set out all the various policies that apply in your diocese?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: One area of difference in your diocese than perhaps others is that all people, including priests, are mandatory reporters?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, anybody over 18 in the Territory is a mandatory reporter.

MS FURNESS: How has that affected, if at all, the work of your priests?
BISHOP HURLEY: I'm not aware that it has affected them in any particular way, except that I expect them to take that very seriously, but I'm not aware of any particular effect it has had on them.

MS FURNESS: Have there been any discussions with the Community Services Department about reporting by priests?

BISHOP HURLEY: Community Services Department of?

MS FURNESS: Within the Northern Territory.

BISHOP HURLEY: No, not specifically to my knowledge.

MS FURNESS: Because the mandatory reporting regime results in reports to the equivalent of a Community Services Department, or Child Welfare Department?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, yes, that's true.

MS FURNESS: There haven't been any discussions with that agency?

BISHOP HURLEY: Not with me, no.

MS FURNESS: There haven't been any discussions among priests about whether it's onerous, not onerous, useful?

BISHOP HURLEY: Not to my knowledge, no. As I say, it's not something I think that has affected them directly, not that I'm aware of.

MS FURNESS: You wouldn't be seeking to argue that they should be exempt from it?

BISHOP HURLEY: Not at all.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Just coming to your statement, question 2 on page 5, paragraph 16. It's in relation to complaints and settlements, and you note that the diocesan office had not made a settlement and that the Professional Standards Office had received very few complaints, and most of those had been referred to the relevant congregations.

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: So it's the case that if a complaint is
received in the diocesan office that affects a member of an order or congregation, you forward that to that body?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, I do. There is a procedure by which that happens, but ultimately, yes.

MS FURNESS: Then you have nothing more to do with it?

BISHOP HURLEY: Well, it's my personal policy to follow up and make sure that I have a clear understanding of what the result of that was, and my director of professional standards would always give me a file, including any documentation that she might think is useful.

MS FURNESS: Do you have any formal role in relation to that complaint that's about a member of an order or congregation?

BISHOP HURLEY: Only insofar as canon law requires me, that if the person is the subject of another entity - another diocesan bishop or religious leader - that I, through my director of professional standards, must see that that procedure is correctly run and that I need to - I certainly do check that it has happened. I would normally contact the person to whom that now - that they become the authority, and make sure there is no misunderstanding or lack of evidence that I can supply.

MS FURNESS: Do you have an interest in the outcome?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, I do.

MS FURNESS: Have you had cause to disagree with what you've been told was the outcome?

BISHOP HURLEY: No, I haven't, not in my time there. No, I haven't. They've been satisfactory, in my opinion.

MS FURNESS: There have been a couple of complaints against clergy?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: You indicate that one was not able to be progressed, as the complainant had left Darwin.

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.
MS FURNESS: What about the priest against whom the complaint was made?

BISHOP HURLEY: That particular priest, as I understand it, was in a state of mental disability in a nursing home at the time, and he was counselled insofar as that was a possibility, but he was really incapax; he was incapable.

MS FURNESS: You didn't need to restrict his ministry in any way because of his circumstances?

BISHOP HURLEY: Correct.

MS FURNESS: You've indicated in one of your policies that risk assessments are conducted for diocesan activities involving children?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Is that a recent initiative?

BISHOP HURLEY: Well, no, it's something that I would have expected and has been part of - particularly in youth ministry, so that if they're having an immersion event in one of our communities or a weekend retreat, or what, then the director of youth ministry must carry out a risk assessment, and to the best of my knowledge that has always been done and I think it has borne fruit.

MS FURNESS: In what way?

BISHOP HURLEY: That there has never been an incident reported to me, either physical - you know, accidents, people travelling to and fro - and/or any suggestion of impropriety.

MS FURNESS: You have schools within your diocese?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, I do.

MS FURNESS: I take it you have an equivalent of a Catholic Education body?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, we do. The Catholic Education Office, we call it.
MS FURNESS: You also have an arm that is involved in Catholic welfare work?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, CatholicCare Northern Territory.

MS FURNESS: Has CatholicCare been audited or accredited in any way?

BISHOP HURLEY: It has indeed. It has the highest possible accreditation, actually, which it didn’t need to pursue but did, and it's one of the few, as I understand it, throughout the nation that has that accreditation.

MS FURNESS: That's with the Australian Childhood Foundation?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, as I understand it.

MS FURNESS: And it was a voluntary matter for you to seek it?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, it was.

MS FURNESS: Was it sought in your time?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, it was.

MS FURNESS: What did you receive?

BISHOP HURLEY: It's an accreditation. I'm not quite sure of the details of that, but it's an accreditation that goes with CatholicCare Northern Territory, and I think it's meant to be an indicator to people who would trust programs to that that this organisation has the highest possible accreditation in this area.

MS FURNESS: You no doubt heard the discussion this morning with your colleagues in relation to why the abuse that we have heard so much about occurred in the Catholic Church. What are your views on that matter?

BISHOP HURLEY: I suppose it's an evolving sense of why it happened. Ms Furness, I suppose I was - my mind was focused in a different way, in a helpful way, by the tragic events that we now have a Royal Commission into in my diocese, into Don Dale and the juvenile prison system. It's much more than an academic exercise for me. I know
those people; I wash their feet in the liturgical function
during Holy Week. I go there and I wash their feet. So
it's not just an academic exercise for me.

When I saw the Four Corners thing, like many people in
the Northern Territory and around Australia, my profound
question was: how on earth could this happen? And I've
thought about that and it has enabled me to make some
comparisons, perhaps, on thinking through that.
I described it at the time in the media as a brutal
betrayal of trust, and I stand by that. I think that's
accurate.

But having said that, so what? How did it happen?
It's probably easier for me to suggest how it happened
there than might happen in my own organisation, but it has
helped me. I think it was an unscrutinised trust, which
should never have been given and should never be given to
anybody where there are children involved. I don't think
you should trust anybody. I don't think you can - I think
that's a failure, to trust somebody else with your
children. You've got to be able to be sure, not trust
them, be sure.

As I say to my priests, you should never make people
guess; they're not your children. So I don't think trust
is a thing that should be easily given. If it is given,
it's sacred, and any betrayal of it is awful. So that was
obvious to me.

It was a matter of power, because there was an
enormous differentiation of power between those children
and the authorities. Unbelievable. It was isolated. By
its very nature it's isolated. There was a lack of
supervision. Who was supervising this whole thing? There
was an acceptance of less than best practice. That was an
element of it, I believe. And it was a closed shop. Who
is to know? And how would we have known other than that?

So I draw some parallels, I guess, in my own mind
about wrestling with how could this happen in what I have
given my life to, the Catholic Church? How could it
happen? And I think there are many elements there that are
relatable. How they relate I think, you know, is awkward
and difficult and so on, but I think they're there, and
it's certainly my intention, as you pointed out with one of
those documents, to eliminate, wherever we can, those
elements.

MS FURNESS: You've heard much discussion about clericalism?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, I have.

MS FURNESS: Clericalism could be seen as relevant to more than one of the factors you've described in relation to juvenile justice.

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, yes.

MS FURNESS: What role do you think it played?

BISHOP HURLEY: It's hard to know, but I think it has played a role. I think it's almost kind of a pathology. Being a cleric is no different from being married, if you're doing it for the right reasons, and I think that pathologies develop in relationships and pathologies develop in people who are celibate, and I think that that sense of clericalism, which I think Archbishop Porteous pointed out - it's a pathology that develops rather than the thing itself. But that doesn't take away from the fact that it happens, and I think there are elements of priesthood and the attitude to priesthood that have loaned themselves to this kind of - I know they call it being put on a pedestal. You know, you don't have to stay on the pedestal. You can get off it.

There is a certain acceptance, I think, amongst some clergy, perhaps not modern, but there was an acceptance that it was a pretty special position.

I think it's like, in many ways, in country places where it's the doctor or the bank manager - they were people who were educated, whatever that meant, but they were people who sat above the rest and were always given deference because it was the doctor, and so if the doctor did it, well - but if your next door neighbour did it, it was a different matter.

I think that the priesthood fitted in to something of that model of being educated, being given deference because of it, because of your role rather than who you were, and I think that probably infected - I think it can infect people's character and so they finish up misusing power and...
expecting things that they shouldn't expect because of some mythical role.

MS FURNESS: One of the key differences between the examples you've given and the role of the priest in a community is that the priest had virtually unparalleled access to children.

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, I'm not quite sure about access to children. I mean --

MS FURNESS: The situation particularly in rural or more distant dioceses was that the priest was often invited home.

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Often helped children with their homework or were permitted in their rooms.

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Often had overnight activities.

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Had access to the children through altar servers, and the like.

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Whereas the examples you've given - a bank manager has little access; a doctor certainly would have access perhaps on a one-to-one basis but not with anything like the frequency of a priest?

BISHOP HURLEY: No, that's true.

MS FURNESS: If, as you say, that deference and power was a factor to play in what had happened, what do you say now about what has changed about that deference and power so as to be satisfied that that has reduced the likelihood of it happening again?

BISHOP HURLEY: I think, as I say, these are things that are evolving in my own understanding of the mystery of what has happened, but one of the things that I think goes with
this kind of clericalism is celibacy. I think there's a connection there.

I was just saying to someone the other day that as a young man, celibacy was not an attractive concept for me at all. So if I wanted to be a priest, I had to some way or another wrestle with, what's the point of that? I think if you ever accepted celibacy because you didn't like women or you didn't want to be committed in a love relationship, I think there's something pathological about that. So I had to work out some way in which, in my own mind, celibacy was a useful thing.

I came to the conclusion during my seminary training that the only way that celibacy would be life giving for me is if it was a total and complete commitment of love that I would make if I was marrying a woman and the family that I would hope to have, that I would make that total commitment as love is to the other and that, for me, the "other" had to be the people I was called to serve.

I think that if you see celibacy - well, I see celibacy as a total availability, as a total service to the other, without response if necessary - that's their business - but my commitment is to them as it would be in a love relationship with another person. I think then that celibacy is life giving, it's joyful, it's meaningful. But I think if it's just a negative thing, I think that it breaks into that world of clericalism because it's a negative. It can be depressive. I think people have a sense of missing out.

So I think the concept of celibacy, for me, is almost key - one of the keys in trying to deal with the clericalism concept.

MS FURNESS: That's not going to change any time soon, is it?

BISHOP HURLEY: Which one?

MS FURNESS: The fact of the celibacy.

BISHOP HURLEY: No, presumably not, but I think you can have a change of attitude to, if you're going to take it on, how you're going to manage it; what does it mean for you.
MS FURNESS: So in terms of my question about what is being done now in relation to clericalism, described as a deference and power relationship, you've answered it with respect to celibacy being a positive element?

BISHOP HURLEY: Part of it, yes.

MS FURNESS: And part of it. And celibacy hasn't changed from then to now, so what is it that you point to to say that, "We have changed this" in order to give comfort to people that what happened before won't happen again?

BISHOP HURLEY: I think that certainly in my own diocese, we would have very strict safeguards. Each parish has safeguards officers; some have more than one. In my relationship with the clergy, we would over and over and over again, at almost at every deanery meeting, every clergy conference, every consultors meeting, every council of priests meeting, bring the matter up and explain, particularly to people who might be new to our country, that we're at the service of people and availability is a key, an absolute key. In the middle of the night, the middle of the day, early, late, you are there at the service of people.

What I'm trying to do, anyway, is not perhaps just attack clericalism but say that the true role of the priest is to be at the service of others. I think if we can get that, the other elements that develop into what we are now terming clericalism and are unfortunate, that's the best way of excluding them. I hope so.

MS FURNESS: You say that your thoughts are evolving?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: You know that the Church created its first procedures 20 years ago?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, I do.

MS FURNESS: Prior to that, there were complaints coming in and the issue was known because of Boston, and the like. Why is it that your thoughts are evolving to the extent that the Church, and you as a member of the Church, find it difficult to explain in concrete terms what happened and
why?

BISHOP HURLEY: Well, I'm not sure. I simply don't know why it happened. I have elements of the matter I referred to with the matter in the Northern Territory. I'm not close to that, but I imagine that there are all sorts of questions in their minds now about how it could happen. Clericalism may be one of them. Isolation is another. Bad formation could be one. Character dysfunction is certainly one.

So all of those things, I think, are elements in it, but it would be, for me, facile to suggest that this is what happened and that's how it occurred. I don't think - in my own mind and heart, it's not as easy as that. It's complicated. It's convoluted. My evolving thinking, I hope, is informed by good research, by revelations of people who have been abused and others who have been helped through that into a new place and now have a new understanding to help me. That's why I say it's evolving.

I don't want to come to some sort of facile conclusion. I want to be open to understanding anything and everything about it in the best possible way, with the best possible brains helping.

MS FURNESS: Towards Healing is applied in your diocese?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, it is.

MS FURNESS: As part of Towards Healing, there's often a meeting between the survivor and somebody from the Church.

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Who routinely attends that meeting in your diocese?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, there hasn't been a case for us to do that. I've done it previously in another place.

MS FURNESS: In Port Pirie?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: In Port Pirie, who attended?
BISHOP HURLEY: I did.

MS FURNESS: As the Bishop of Port Pirie?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Did you experience from that meeting any revelations in relation to child sexual abuse by clergy?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes. I think probably for all of us, I imagine, the first thing that you experience is absolute heartbreak to see the pain and the devastation that it causes to people, not only to the people themselves but to their other relationships, which is tragic. There's a difference, I think, in my own life, anyway, of reading about something or reading a report and sitting down eyeball to eyeball with somebody, because it sears it into you. It's an experience. It's not just information; it's experience.

I must say I'm very grateful for that, not because it happened but because I'm different because of it. It may not be very universal, but one of the lovely things for me is that on several occasions we were able to work through, with their help, to a very good place. I'm not saying that because I thought it was a good place but because that was the response of the people that were involved.

I've found it wasn't always the best experience and it didn't always work the way I wanted, but on many occasions it did and it helped me an enormous amount.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Coming back to your statement, you were asked some questions about priests from overseas and how that was dealt with.

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, yes.

MS FURNESS: At paragraph 37 of your statement, you say that you have an understanding of the need to enculturate priests that come from overseas, and you provide an example of a priest from Tanzania. Can you tell us about that?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes. He's a very fine person. If I could digress just for a moment about that particular priest, and I suppose it's relevant. He had never been out of
Tanzania. He'd never been on a plane, and he came from Morogoro to Dar es Salaam to Darwin, which was an enormous exercise for him. And within two days, his mother, whom he had left in good health, died suddenly.

I suppose it's in the context of this that I said to him, "Well, you must go home." He said, "No, my family would not expect me to come home, now that I've just been here." I said, "Yes, but your bishop will expect you to go home." He said, "My bishop would expect me not to go home, because I've just come here." Finally, I said, "Well, actually, I'm your bishop and I want you on the plane tomorrow." So he did that.

It has been one of those exercises, again, which you think you ought to have done, but in talking with him, it has been so important that he was there for that and not go home on leave six months later and people tell him about it. And it was lovely - another priest from India who came and was not long with us, a similar thing happened, and I got this man from Tanzania in and I said, "Can you talk to this man about the need to go home."

So that kind of gelled for me the way that we could induct them into the culture of Australia. That was part of it, but I also said to this man from Tanzania, "I want you to come to Sydney and do a course", which he did and found really, really helpful. I said, "When you come back, you've got to talk to all the rest of the priests and tell them what you learned and what was different and what they should look out for", and so on.

We've had other priests go through that, but I think, for him, it stood out for me as a very useful exercise. It's not watertight and I think he still struggles with the authority figure. For him, to disagree or to indicate he might disagree with a person in authority is not his culture. I've tried to say to him, "In our culture, you're not being indifferent or rude. If you have something to say, you say it in a respectful way, but you say it, and that's what I expect and that's what other people in authority expect of you, to get your opinion."

But if he had a contra opinion, he told me he would find it really difficult to express it to his superior. So that has been helpful to me, too, and helpful to me in talking with all the priests about what I'd call
enculturation. I think they call it "acculturation" and a few other things now. How do you manage your life as a priest from overseas in an Australian context?

Particularly in my diocese, Ms Furness, a third of my diocese is Aboriginal people and communities. Marvellous, beautiful people, who talk different languages and so on. We also have about 82 different nationalities. So these priests are much more at home, in a way, in my diocese than they are in other places sometimes, because there's a community where they feel safe and people within that community whom they trust and respect, who could say, "Look, you can't do that. You know, that's not what we do here in Australia."

I suppose that's a long answer to your question, but it's how we're trying to do it.

MS FURNESS: You say that the course that he and others have done in Sydney went well?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Are you able to test that or measure that in any way other than your discussions with them on their return?

BISHOP HURLEY: No, probably not. I don't know - I don't have access - I mean, I could get it, I think. When I say I don't have access, I've not followed up access to any evaluation of those courses. They're generally regarded as very good, and so that's as far as I've gone. I've not seen any evaluation, a technical, scientific evaluation, of them.

MS FURNESS: You say that you have a very diverse community in Darwin.

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: How does that affect, if at all, the work you're doing in safeguarding?

BISHOP HURLEY: In many ways I think it makes it easier, and in many other ways it makes it more difficult, because I'm not quite sure myself how best to relate to some cultures. I do my best. I try my best by having people
within those various cultural groups that I know and trust, and they are open with me about telling me what's right and wrong, particularly our indigenous communities.

But the easier way, I think, is that in many of our communities, the protection of children is a very high priority, so that helps. But I think in some of our other communities, I'm just not terribly familiar with how best to inculcate what I want other than to say it.

I introduced a diocesan magazine. Pretty much every issue has articles in it from our director of professional standards, our integrity officer or me or all of us around what to do, the importance of it, what does it look like, so we're constantly getting it into situations, but I'm not quite sure how to evaluate the various communities and how effective I'm being. I'm not sure how to do that.

MS FURNESS: But you're satisfied, from the feedback you get and the work that you're doing, that you think it's making a difference?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes, I do.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: If I may, Ms Furness, there's a question that arises from what you've just said. We are indeed a multicultural society. I can give you two examples in my state, of Port Hedland and Katanning, both rural towns, which have between 50 and 60 different nationalities each. So it's a common feature of Australian society.

The Church can't do the job of child protection on its own, which means that children need education about what's right or wrong or possible with their bodies, parents, and the community. Given what you said earlier about it being important not to overtrust - I don't think you used that word, but you know what I mean - individuals, what are you doing to communicate to the various communities what their expectations of the priests should be?

BISHOP HURLEY: Commissioner, I suppose the main thing and the first thing we'd be doing is instructing the priests and whatnot to do that work. We also have safeguarding officers in each parish, and they're appointed by me. They report back to the integrity officer. I was just in Alice Springs on Thursday, or whatever, and just by
accident I ran into this gentleman, who said, "Can you have a look at this for me, because the three of us are at mass on Sunday doing our annual PowerPoint presentation on our role as safeguarding officers and what we expect of everybody and what they can expect of us and what the responsibilities are. Can you have a look at it for me?"

So I think that, as best I'm able, I'm working on the grounds that I don't want to have anybody just on trust. I want to make sure, as best I'm able, that they're reporting facts, that they are in touch with people who have questions, that they're constantly reviewing what they're doing and that I'm constantly reviewing what they're doing. So I suppose there is ultimately some element of trust in that you trust the families with their children, and that's probably not unfair.

**COMMISSIONER MURRAY:** How do the children and the parents and the broader local community of all these various demographic groups you talk about know what rules you have set for priests, which they should be aware of and themselves follow?

**BISHOP HURLEY:** I'll have it here, but one of the things that would go on the overhead, for instance, and in our magazine is exactly what they can expect and what safeguards there are and what elements of safety for their child are being observed and must be observed, and, if they're not, what they're meant to do.

**MS FURNESS:** Just returning to priests from overseas for a moment, you say in your statement that the diocese has a policy of not accepting overseas seminarians?

**BISHOP HURLEY:** Yes.

**MS FURNESS:** So I take it from that that you accept priests who have been ordained?

**BISHOP HURLEY:** Yes.

**MS FURNESS:** Why is that?

**BISHOP HURLEY:** It's a personal thing, Ms Furness. I'm uncomfortable, I suppose, going back in a way I hadn't thought of until now, but perhaps I don't want to trust other seminaries that I know nothing about, as it were, to
present me with priests that I want to work with my people.

Other bishops do different things, but I do not do that specifically for that reason. I feel much more comfortable - and this is what we do. We invite priests from overseas, but I will know either the bishop very well or the vicar general. I would normally go, or the vicar general would go and interview those people in their place, where you have an opportunity to listen to them, to see how they react, to ask others about them and to look at any records that you might want to look at. And then they're on a contract, maybe a four-year contract.

I feel that I can manage that much better, and if I'm uncomfortable about anything about that to the point that it's not being resolved, I would ask the bishop to take them back.

But if I have a seminarian from overseas that trains here and becomes part of my diocese, well, then, he's part of the diocese forever, until he dies. I, as the bishop, want to be sure, as best I can, that he's going to be a good priest in our diocese, hopefully without any problems.

MS FURNESS: Have you sent anyone back?

BISHOP HURLEY: No, and I hope that that's a tribute to our preparation of people coming. I hope it is.

MS FURNESS: You will understand that the Commonwealth has announced a redress scheme following the Royal Commission's recommendation?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Have you formed a view as to whether or not your diocese should opt in to that?

BISHOP HURLEY: Absolutely. I think it's totally, absolutely imperative that we have an independent national redress system from the point of view that (a) it's whatever it is but (b) and for me the most important thing about it is that it takes that whole redress thing out of the pastoral approach to victims.

One thing that I've found incredibly frustrating is
that the pastoral aspect of a mediation can go well until somebody intervenes and then there's litigation and all of that, so those two things then clash. It's heartbreaking when you see somebody taken out of that whole pastoral context on the grounds that you can't meet a quite ambit claim, and then it goes through and you are cut out of that because you write to the person and you get a letter back from their legal representative saying, "All correspondence will come through me."

I just think that if we can have an independent national redress scheme, that's out of the way. I'm left then with saying, "Well, I'm sorry it wasn't more", or, "I'm glad it was", whatever it is, "But that's not my business. My business is with you, and now how can you and I work through this thing? You argue with them about that."

It would be just wonderful, I think. I think it's imperative if we're to deal with this business. It's imperative.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Can I move to you, Bishop Long. Would you tell the Royal Commission your full name?

BISHOP LONG: My name is Vincent Long Van Nguyen.

MS FURNESS: You're the Bishop of the Diocese of Parramatta?

BISHOP LONG: Yes, that's correct.

MS FURNESS: What did you do before your appointment in Parramatta?

BISHOP LONG: I was an auxiliary bishop in Melbourne for nearly five years, from June 2011 till my appointment to Parramatta, which was in June last year.

MS FURNESS: When were you ordained?

BISHOP LONG: I was ordained an auxiliary bishop on 26 June 2011.

MS FURNESS: And as a priest?

BISHOP LONG: As a priest, I was ordained in December
1989, also in Melbourne.

MS FURNESS: So you had only worked in Melbourne before you came to Parramatta?

BISHOP LONG: No, I had worked in a number of places. I am a Franciscan, a religious, and so I did my initial training in Wollongong and then in Sydney. Then I went to the seminary to study theology for five years in Melbourne, where I was ordained. Then subsequent to that, I had a number of appointments, including assistant priest in various parishes in Melbourne, and I did two stints in Rome, initially as a student, a postgraduate student, for two years, and in 2008 to 2011, for nearly three years, I worked at the international leadership team of my order in Rome.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. I think you have the status of being the first bishop of Vietnamese background; is that right?

BISHOP LONG: In Australia, Ms Furness, yes.

MS FURNESS: Yes. You were born in Vietnam?

BISHOP LONG: I was born in Vietnam. I was a boat person in 1980 and I transited in Malaysia. I stayed in a refugee camp for 16 months before I came to Australia.

MS FURNESS: How old were you when you came to Australia?

BISHOP LONG: I was one day short of my 20th birthday. That was in December 1981.

MS FURNESS: You, soon after, went into a seminary here or you had been involved before?

BISHOP LONG: I was in a minor seminary in Vietnam, which was still in operation prior to the communist takeover, so I was trained as a minor seminarian, but in a diocesan jurisdiction, not a religious institute.

MS FURNESS: In your diocese, do you receive applications or approaches from priests overseas, including Vietnam, to come to your diocese?

BISHOP LONG: Not from Vietnam but from other countries,
especially from India. We have a number of mostly
religious priests who applied to minister in our diocese
and some of them were accepted, so we have some
overseas-born priests working in our diocese.

MS FURNESS: You heard Bishop Hurley's evidence about not
accepting seminarians and accepting only those who have
been ordained elsewhere and following a process of
interview, and the like. Do you follow any similar
process?

BISHOP LONG: No. The fact is that we do have some, not
a great number of overseas-born seminarians. We apply
a very robust system of screening and monitoring in order
to ensure that these candidates who are sourced from
overseas are fit for our diocese.

MS FURNESS: Do you use the facilities Bishop Hurley
referred to in Sydney?

BISHOP LONG: No, we have our own seminary. In fact, only
last Sunday I blessed and opened our new seminary, called
the Holy Spirit Seminary, in our own diocese.

MS FURNESS: By opening that, do we take it that you have
a sufficient number of priests coming forward to require
a new seminary?

BISHOP LONG: Yes, well, in fact, we had our own
"seminary" for a number of years even before I came into
the diocese. They were housed in different locations
because we didn't have the facility to accommodate all of
them. So we were able to build our own seminary and
thankfully we have a large number of native-born,
home-grown candidates in addition to some who were overseas
born.

MS FURNESS: The Royal Commission has heard a deal of
evidence about the diminishing numbers of young men coming
forward to be a priest or religious. That's not your
experience in your diocese?

BISHOP LONG: I think there is also a reduction in the
number of candidates coming forward. I think it's
a universal phenomenon. We have seminarians - the latest
count is 16, but that's in no way sufficient in terms of
the replacement rate. So I wouldn't say that we buck the
trend as such, although thankfully in comparison to other jurisdictions, certainly to similar-sized dioceses in Australia, we have more candidates to the priesthood.

MS FURNESS: You will have heard evidence this morning about some seminarians in some seminaries wishing to adopt a more traditional approach to wearing the garb, et cetera. Is that an experience that you've had?

BISHOP LONG: It is my concern that there is a trend not only in certain seminaries in Australia but I think it's a by-product of the two pontificates before that of Pope Francis which encouraged a certain restoration, you might say, of the traditional model of Church, and therefore the seminarians who were trained in that period, I would say, were by-products of that kind of culture in the Church.

MS FURNESS: You've also heard evidence that clericalism has been described as a factor or playing a role in the abuse of children and the response to that abuse and the connection between the deference and power that is part of clericalism and the more traditional approach of some seminarians. Now, do you see it like that?

BISHOP LONG: I do, and I see the clericalism as a by-product of a certain model of Church informed or underpinned or sustained by a certain theology. I mean, it's no secret that we have been operating, at least under the two previous pontificates, from what I'd describe as a perfect society model where there is a neat, almost divinely inspired, pecking order, and that pecking order is heavily tilted towards the ordained. So you have the pope, the cardinals, the bishops, religious, consecrated men and women, and the laity right at the bottom of the pyramid.

I think we need to dismantle that model of Church. If I could use the biblical image of wineskins, it's old wineskins that are no longer relevant, no longer able to contain the new wine, if you like. I think we really need to examine seriously that kind of model of Church where it promotes the superiority of the ordained and it facilitates that power imbalance between the ordained and the non-ordained, which in turn facilitates that attitude of clericalism, if you like.

I come from a very high power distance index culture.
By that, I mean a culture where the lower-ranked individuals not only accept but expect that power is distributed unequally among its citizens. Even to this day, to this very day, a parish priest can unilaterally excommunicate his parishioners, even though he mightn't have the canonical power to do so. In practice, that's what is happening. I shudder to think of the risk that children and vulnerable adults, vulnerable individuals, are exposed to in that kind of environment. It's still the experience in those countries.

I think there's a link between compulsory or mandatory celibacy and clericalism in that compulsory celibacy is an act of setting apart the ordained. It's creating that power distance between the ordained and the non-ordained. Insofar as it is an instrument of subjugation or subservience, if you like, of the laity, it is wrong and it has to be reviewed. It has to be looked at, I think, very seriously.

Again, in my culture, my home culture, the parishioners, the faithful, address the priest as "father", as they do across the world, except that the form of address on the part of the non-ordained is a bit more drastic, in that if you, who are a non-ordained person, address me as a priest, you have to use a certain personal form of address that identifies you as subservient, as a lower-ranking person, like a daughter. So I would say that in order to dismantle clericalism, we need to look at also the issue of examination and maybe abolition of those honorific titles, privileges and institutional dynamics, if you like, that breed clerical superiority and elitism.

People still address me, especially the faithful Catholics, as "Your Lordship", and I sort of cringe at that. Or when they come to see me, or they come to meet me, they kiss my ring. I'm not very comfortable with those sorts of practices because they encourage a certain infantilisation of the laity and that creation of the power distance between the ordained and the non-ordained, and I think we have to look at these things seriously.

MS FURNESS: Have you observed any change in that area towards being more relaxed?

BISHOP LONG: I think Pope Francis is certainly leading the way in that direction. Whether or not it's being
filtered down the ranks I'm not quite certain. For my part, I know - or I feel that, especially as a bishop, I need to lead the way in promoting the Church as a communio, as a discipleship of equals, that emphasises relationships rather than power. I feel that's where we should be headed to.

THE CHAIR: Bishop, you provide a striking description of what you see as the situation of the Church, but can we just ask the others. Archbishop Prowse, do you share the bishop's understanding of the Church and how it might need to change?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, I resonated with quite a lot of Bishop Long's statements, particularly, I mean, I try to accept people where they are. When they greet me, they greet me in the way they are comfortable with. But particularly with the honorifics, it can encourage an infantilisation.

I do believe, though, that when they call the priest "father", for instance, it's not just an honorific; for many of them, it sort of indicates who he is in their spiritual life and who they are before God, so there's a spiritual dimension there, too. So there's a certain nuance there. I wouldn't demand being called these honorifics, but if it happens, I would accept the people, the way they offer that to me.

THE CHAIR: Archbishop Porteous, do you share the bishop's perception of the state of the Church, as it were?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I certainly think that it's very important and something that's in my own heart, that priests and bishops are close to people and that we are not seen as distant or seen, as Bishop Long was saying, in some kind of exalted position.

Certainly my own efforts as a priest and as bishop have always been to try to build fraternal relationships with people. I often would use the words "my brothers and sisters" rather than the father/son kind of distinction. My attitude has always been to try to foster this sense that we are together, because we have a common dignity in the fact that we are all baptised Christians. We are Christians first and we share a common journey of faith together. That's fundamentally the attitude that I try to
live and try to promote.

THE CHAIR: Would you encourage people to call you Julian?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I wouldn't encourage it. I don't object to it.

THE CHAIR: It's just a way of understanding how you see yourself.

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Sure. I think generally there has been a tradition in my own archdiocese where I receive the title "Your Grace". Sometimes people say "archbishop" and sometimes people say "Julian". I never insist or demand on any of those titles, but I also don't promote one against the other. I leave it to people's own - because people also have certain approaches themselves. I don't think it's necessarily a matter of subservience. They just give respect to the office, and so I appreciate that as well.

THE CHAIR: I think what Bishop Long is saying is that the problems he sees in this, can I call it structure or culture, if they're going to change, be removed, it will require the clergy to do the removing, not the laity. Do you understand?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes, and I would agree. I think it's important that priests have the right attitudes towards their relationship with people in the Church.

THE CHAIR: Bishop Hurley, do you have any comments on what Bishop Long was saying?

BISHOP HURLEY: I generally agree with that. The only thing is that I think you have to not dishonour people's own culture. I don't want to dictate to them, "This is wrong." If they greet me in a certain way where they're comfortable and find that that's helpful to them, I would never want them to feel that they had to sort of grovel or something, even if that were their culture, but if they want to show respect to the office.

One of the things I do regularly is stand down the back of the cathedral at one of the other masses just in an open-neck shirt. People are pushing past me to get out, and if I didn't move, they'd run over me, I think. And then I come back in an hour later with all my bishop's
accoutrements and people want to kiss your hand. What it
reminds me of is that they're not doing it to me; they're
honouring the office. Provided that's what they're doing,
I'm much more comfortable. As I say, I actually experience
it deliberately to remind myself it's nothing to do with
you; it's the office that you are inhabiting. I never want
to say to people, "I don't want you to call me whatever." I
tend to be comfortable with whatever they want to call
me.

Some people would call me Eugene. Some people call me
Bishop Eugene. Many people call me "father", who have
known me for a long time. Personally I like the title
"father" from the point of view that it reminds me that
that's my role, to care and give myself for others, and
I hope it reminds me, too, that they're investing a lot of
trust in me.

THE CHAIR: Bishop, some people might say that in you
identifying the respect paid to the office, that's the very
problem that clericalism is all about?

BISHOP HURLEY: Yes. Yes, I understand that, but I would
put it in the context of most people I know that have
a friendship and even familiarity with their own doctor.
When they go to see him, they'd always refer to him as,
"Good morning, Dr John." On the golf course, they might
call him John. But it's just a recognition that you're
going to him in a professional capacity, if you like, and
you're recognising that. You're perhaps reminding him that
you want him to have a professional attitude to you, too,
with regard to confidentiality and so forth, that you're
not playing golf with him; you're there for a clinical
appointment, and you're perhaps making the difference by
recognising that he's your doctor today and he's your
golfing partner tomorrow.

THE CHAIR: You two bishops don't feel left out. We'll
come back to you on these issues.

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: Could I just take it to a more
significant level, and that is if we do believe in
a discipleship of equals, which was, in many senses,
fundamental to the Second Vatican Council's teachings, the
rubber hits the roads when you are prepared to share
governance arrangements equally both at parish and at
diocesan level, doesn't it?
At the end of the day, what we call each other in any of the Church environments we’ve spoken to is one thing, but isn't what we've heard in the last couple of weeks calling into question the commitment of many leaders in the Church, at both parish and diocesan level, the willingness to actually embrace a shared governance model between men and women, priest and religious alike? Without affecting the canon law as it is for the moment, isn't that really the difficulty?

I was wondering, Bishop Vincent, isn't the point that you get to that if you believe in what you've just said about the discipleship of equals, there is a need to look at the governance arrangements within parishes and dioceses that we currently operate under?

BISHOP LONG: Yes, Commissioner, I do believe that the marginalisation of women and the laity is part of this culture of clericalism that contributes not insignificantly to the sexual abuse crisis, and I think if we are serious about reform, this is one of the areas that we need to look at.

Accountability in that perfect Church model only works upwards. You're accountable to the person above you. As long as the bishop has the backing of the Pope, he's safe. As long as the priest has the backing of his bishop, he's safe. There's no accountability that reaches outwards or downwards, and that's the critical problem, as far as I see. That discipleship of equals calls into question that upward accountability that is in operation as a result of that ecclesiastical model of a perfect society where everyone knows their place and the pecking order is strictly dictated by ordination.

The laity have no meaningful or direct participation in the appointment, supervision and even removal of the parish priest. I think that needs to change. Or even at the episcopal level, the appointment, supervision and removal of a bishop is virtually excluded from the faithful. The Morris affair is a typical example of that. There's no accountability to the faithful there. So that needs to be examined if we are serious about creating a new culture of accountability in the Church today.

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: Could we just extend it one step
further, and I'm mindful of the time. Would it not have
served the Church well had parishes and dioceses adopted
that which was sought to be adopted after the Vatican
Council, that is, parish councils and pastoral councils
which may have in fact informed and kept informed the
leaders of the Church as to what was going on and also
assisted in the way in which they might have responded to
those claims?

So it's not just about accountability to the faithful;
isn't one of the missing links today and in the past the
absence of a robust governance arrangement, including the
laity, which would have in fact enabled leaders to
understand what was going on and given guidance as to how
to respond, and is that still a problem within the modern
Church?

BISHOP LONG: I think it is, Commissioner. I think it is
still a problem within the Church. A parish priest, even
today, can unilaterally dismiss the parish council. And
many did. Many have. To me, that's the glaring gap that
we need to really examine seriously. And, really, what do
we do in terms of empowering the people? What do we do in
terms of addressing the power imbalance between the
ordained and the non-ordained? What do we do about the
full participation of the faithful, and women in
particular, in the governance structures of the Church?

I think these are serious issues that need to be
addressed if we are to come clean of this abuse crisis,
because it's not just the symptoms on the surface but what
lies underneath it, and I think it's harder to address what
lies underneath the phenomenon than to address what's on
the surface.

THE CHAIR: Yes, bishop, thank you. We'll take lunch.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

MS FURNESS: Thank you, your Honour. There are just
a couple of matters I want to raise with the four of you
before I ask questions of the gentlemen at the Bar table.

Can I start with you, Bishop Long. I did not,
I think, ask you about whether or not you had followed any
procedure, like Bishop Hurley, in relation to
reconciliation and whether it was to be in open or
otherwise?

BISHOP LONG: I am certainly open to the concept of a ceremony of lamentation, sorrow and apology, if you like, but I would like to think that --

THE CHAIR: I think you are at cross-purposes.

MS FURNESS: Yes, I think that's right, too. Bishop Hurley gave evidence that he had provided to all of his parish priests and schools a statement setting out the approach he wished them to take in relation to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and that was that it should occur in an open setting and in the full view of all participants, who were supervised by staff. Do you understand what I'm saying?

BISHOP LONG: Yes, yes, I do.

MS FURNESS: Have you done anything similar?

BISHOP LONG: I haven't written a pastoral letter to that effect. However, the professional standards training sessions that we provide for our clergy and seminarians certainly contain those elements, which, by the way, are stipulated in Towards Healing documents.

MS FURNESS: Bishop Porteous, can I ask you the same question?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes, certainly. I haven't done as Bishop Hurley has done, written something specific. In fact, preparing for this Commission has highlighted aspects of this question which I am reflecting on and it is something which I think would be very valuable to do initially for priests, to talk more specifically about it.

In Tasmania, generally, the sacrament is celebrated in the open. That's a general practice across the diocese, so I haven't seen a need to say something specific, but I'll certainly take it on board in the light of particularly Bishop Hurley's letter.

MS FURNESS: Bishop, I've asked the others but not you whether you would opt in if there were a Commonwealth redress scheme that invited you to opt in?
ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Myself? Yes, yes, I would. I'm very much in favour of it. I think it would be a very important step forward and I would fully support it.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Prowse, in relation to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, what's your practice?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: At this stage, I haven't felt the need to write a letter because I understand that that is the practice already.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. If I can now turn to Bishop Saunders, perhaps you could tell the Royal Commission your full name?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: I'm Christopher Alan Saunders.

MS FURNESS: You are the Bishop of Broome?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Bishop of Broome, Western Australia.

MS FURNESS: You have held that position since 1996?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: That's correct.

MS FURNESS: Prior to that, what were you in the Church?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Prior to that, I was administrator of the cathedral in Broome.

MS FURNESS: The Diocese of Broome covers a very large area?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Yes, it does, 773,000 square kilometres.

MS FURNESS: How many Catholics do you minister to in that area?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Somewhere in the region of - well, it depends whose figures you believe. Somewhere in the region of 10,000.

MS FURNESS: And you have a dozen or so Catholic schools?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: That's correct, yes, 13.

MS FURNESS: In terms of your engagement in the Diocese of
Broome with children, you clearly are involved with children at the schools?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Do you have a welfare arm, if I can put it that way - CatholicCare or something similar?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Yes, we have Centacare, which has been operating for some years. It operates as something that originates from the diocese.

MS FURNESS: And in addition to those two areas?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: No, not really. Just the parishes and the schools, yes, but no other agencies as such.

MS FURNESS: In terms of the parishes, are there organised activities in relation to children?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Because of the distances involved, there isn't a lot of that sort of thing that happens. If it does, it's usually school based, in which case it comes under the auspices of Catholic Education, although the priest may well be involved.

But while we have only 10 parishes, we have numerous remote communities that we service, and the priests spend a large amount of their time, unless they are in Broome - apart from Broome, they spend a large amount of their time travelling. So organised youth groups tend to be school based rather than parish based.

MS FURNESS: In the Diocese of Broome, you apply the policies and procedures that have been established nationally - Towards Healing, Integrity in Ministry and the like?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Yes, we have.

MS FURNESS: You haven't created or adapted any policy for specific use in your diocese?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: No, basically because we haven't had cause to use even those, as yet.

MS FURNESS: There haven't been any complaints?
BISHOP SAUNDERS: There has been a complaint, but it was looked into by the police and wasn't taken any further, as the person involved who is accused is out of the country.

MS FURNESS: What did you do in relation to that complaint?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, I was out of the country myself when it became public, so I asked the local priest to contact the police. This had already happened, because it was in fact something that was revealed within the school bounds, so then we sort of stepped back from it.

MS FURNESS: What did you do in respect of the priest? I understand you said he was overseas, but did you take any action in relation to the priest's faculties or --

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Yes, I rang his superior to tell him that when he returned from vacation, he would be stood down while there was a police investigation taking place. His superior didn't know that he was in the country and didn't know where he was at that stage. So that's all that we did.

MS FURNESS: Did the priest come back?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: He did not.

MS FURNESS: He didn't come back?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: He did not, despite the fact that I had urged his superior to send him back.

MS FURNESS: What order was it?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: It was the Heralds of Good News.

MS FURNESS: Is that a male order?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: It is a male order of priests based in the subcontinent.

MS FURNESS: In your statement, at paragraph 8 you say that your observations of the working of this Royal Commission and the encouragement of the Bishops Conference have led you to be more vigilant with regard to
clergy and religious. That's right?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: That's correct.

MS FURNESS: How has that vigilance played out?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, in two ways. We're very, very
strict on any priest coming in to the diocese. We have
a lot of people on holidays. The only significant industry
that is at work in Broome is the tourist industry, and we
have a lot of clergy and religious who would come up on
holidays, so we're very strict about them having
professional standards clearances before they are able to
celebrate mass or to be part and parcel of any life within
the parish.

The other thing that we have decided to do is that at
the next meeting of the priests and pastoral associates and
principals, they will be having in-servicing from the
Professional Standards Office of Western Australia.

MS FURNESS: In relation to the clergy that come on
holidays and the like, you said that they need to have
professional standards clearances.

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Mmm.

MS FURNESS: What do you mean by that?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, I mean they have to have a letter
from their bishop saying they are of good standing.

MS FURNESS: So a certificate, as it were, of good
standing?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: That's correct.

MS FURNESS: Anything else?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, this national system that is being
rolled out will eventually take care of that.

MS FURNESS: By which you mean the register?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: That's correct.

MS FURNESS: You have heard the discussion this morning,
bishop, about why the clergy and religious have been
engaged in child sexual abuse to the extent that has been
revealed.

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Do you have any comments you want to make on
why you think that abuse has occurred and, secondly, the
response to it has been as it is?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, I would agree that there has been
a massive failure on behalf of the Church to respond
appropriately to the issues and the matters and the
allegations of sexual abuse throughout Australia. I would
go so far as to say that while these are individual
failings, there may well be some part of the system that is
at fault.

With regard to clergy, I would think we need a closer
examination of the three main areas that have been raised
already, which are recruitment and what happens at
recruitment. Myself, I was in my third year of the
seminary before we did any psychological testing, which in
those days was in its infancy, but I believe that that's
now common practice, and I believe that should be applied
again later, during formation, and I understand that in
some places, at least, it is. So recruitment and
formation.

The matter that you refer to quite often, which is
clericalism, I think is a very significant problem. I'm
not sure that I agree with all the definitions of
clericalism, but there is one definition I agree with, and
that is that it is the abuse of power and authority. It
stems from, I think, an immature understanding of Church.
By that, I mean perhaps even a redundant understanding of
Church.

We know that in pre-Vatican times, the theological
underpinning with regard to the Church was that the Church
was a perfect society. We know also that in the teachings
of Vatican II, there was an enormous shift pushing the
Church from that into the Church as communio, as
a community of service together.

Now, that shift has not yet taken place. It is not
yet complete. That is to say that the theological
underpinning is not yet entirely understood in its new
format, and I think that is what the Holy Father is trying
to do. As he speaks against clericalism, he’s talking
against privilege; he’s speaking in favour of service.

Now, the social critics tell us that it takes
something like about 75 years for an ecumenical council to
make itself fully effective, and we're about 50 years down
the track. I think the Holy Father is really trying to
change the Church enormously along the lines of Church as
communio and of service and moving us away from that
privileged position or description that might have once
defined us - and still does, I'm afraid.

MS FURNESS: What can you do in your area, in the Diocese
of Broome, to make that happen?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: I'm in the fortunate position, I only
have 13 clergy altogether. We know each other very well.
We work very closely together. We're also very busy
people, but we are involved closely with the workings of
the communities in which we are immersed and we work
closely together. There wouldn't be a day go past that
I don't ring one of the priests and talk to them. There
wouldn't be a week go past when I haven't spoken to most
of, if not all of, the pastoral associates that are also at
work there. So it's one of the advantages of being small.
As a diocese, and as a small diocese, we can do things in
a way that other places can't.

I know argument by analogy is very weak, but if some
of the other dioceses, by size, are Coles and Woolworths,
we are the corner store and that's how we operate, and very
much so do we know each other and know our strengths and
our weaknesses.

So to answer your question, we bring to the attention
of clergy, in the times that we meet and in the
conversations that we have, not only our aspirations but
also our worries and our concerns. One of those concerns
would be that the priest would exist, in his own mind, at
least, or in the image of others, as somebody who is in
a privileged position. I would like to think that they are
at the coalface alongside their brothers and sisters.

MS FURNESS: Unlike Coles and Woolworths, you are not in
competition with your other dioceses and bishops, are you?
BISHOP SAUNDERS: I am not.

MS FURNESS: There are various forums available to you, with your fellow bishops, to discuss matters of common interest to the Church?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Yes.

MS FURNESS: At any of those gatherings or forums, has this issue been raised?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Which particular issue?

MS FURNESS: The one you have just spoken about in terms of --

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Clericalism?

MS FURNESS: Yes.

BISHOP SAUNDERS: I certainly have been part of conversations on several occasions with individual bishops or with a group of bishops. I would stand to be corrected here, but I don't know that we've spoken about it in plenary as a subject, but certainly with groups of bishops and individually with bishops.

MS FURNESS: In those discussions, have you found that your view is generally held or you are an outlier?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, nobody has expressed a view to the contrary. In the conversations to which I have been party, there is great concern that our clergy are seen, by all of the bishops, as serving their people and serving them in equality. We know that doesn't exist, but it's also difficult in some circumstances to change things overnight, to change the scene as we would want it.

Certainly one of the things that has come up in conversation is this matter of clericalism, and indeed many of the matters that have been raised by the Royal Commission should become a subject of discussion at our synod, the Australian Synod which is planned in 2020. I would think that it has been fertile ground here today and in the other days to have listened to the proceedings of the Royal Commission, and I imagine that the findings of
the Royal Commission not only will be fertile ground but
will be subject matter for that synod.

MS FURNESS: You refer to things not changing overnight,
but of course it has been 20 years since the Church set up
its first formal structure, being Towards Healing.

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Mmm.

MS FURNESS: So there has been a deal of time that has
passed.

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Yes, there has, mmm.

MS FURNESS: And have there been changes in that time?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Oh, I've seen lots of changes, but,
I mean, one of the bishops I think said that sometimes
parish priests are in a position where they are
unassailable. Perhaps that's my word, not his. But that
being the case, it's sometimes difficult, very difficult,
to implement the sort of change that you want to implement
because really it means changing people's attitudes. If
you're going to change people's attitudes, that means
well-founded strategies and good formation, ongoing
formation for clergy with these issues in mind.

MS FURNESS: When you say "good strategy", do you mean
strategy in addition to formation or that is part of the
strategy?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: I mean winning over the minds of clergy
and those that are working with you in such a way that they
will want to not only cooperate but be part and parcel of
a new way of being Church.

MS FURNESS: I take it from what you have said that there
are priests whose minds have yet to be won over?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: I would imagine - that I had won over?

MS FURNESS: No, that haven't been won over.

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Yes.

MS FURNESS: That's right; that's your understanding?
BISHOP SAUNDERS: I would imagine so.

MS FURNESS: What does one need to do to win them over?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, I don't know that I can answer that. I think that that's --

MS FURNESS: The Church has to be able to answer it, doesn't it?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: I think that every Church in itself needs to answer that. In the Church of the Kimberley, where I come from, we're doing what we can because we know the people and we know the situation. The Church of wherever we want to talk about knows its own people and needs to apply itself to its own people.

A national approach is only good if it is implemented locally. To have a national standard is a wonderful thing, but it has to be accepted and then applied locally, and that's what takes time.

MS FURNESS: You believe you have applied it locally in your area?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, I think we have. I think we have. I think we have a sense of mission that we share. Part of that, I have to say, is because of the geographical location of where we are and how we operate and the small numbers that are involved. We're able to discuss these issues in a mature way and apply strategies where necessary.

MS FURNESS: So the effect of what you are saying is that it depends upon individual bishops to effect the change you have described?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: The way the Catholic Church is, yes, it depends largely on the bishop - not entirely, but largely on the bishop and the leadership that the bishop affords his diocese. Of course, he has to have the cooperation of others, too.

MS FURNESS: Others being outside his diocese?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Others being the priests that he is working with within his own diocese.
MS FURNESS: So you are suggesting that change will only happen if it happens locally and if the bishop wants there to be change and the priests agree that there will be change?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: I think we can paint a national picture of an ideal circumstance, but it has to be applied locally. The only way that you can apply it effectively is if you know your priests and if you know your people and you know how to apply it effectively. I mean, I think that I'm a reasonable bishop for the Kimberley. I don't know how I would go somewhere else. And I think that bishops who are in their own locations ought to, if they don't already, know their people and their circumstances, and largely I believe this is the case.

MS FURNESS: How can those bishops who have not done what you have done be influenced to take that step?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: I think the workings of this Royal Commission but also the discussions we have had as Church. I've been a bishop since 1996, and it was then, as you quite rightly point out, from 20 years ago, that these terrible things came to light and we've been trying to grapple with them.

There has been a generational change in the construct of the Bishops Conference, for instance. I came in as a junior bishop in 1996, and by ordination I think I'm now about number 4. That carries no particular weight with it, but it just does show the generational change that has happened in those 20 years. Along with those generational changes is, I think, an openness to a new vision of Church. It is something developing and it is something that hasn't developed fast enough. I do believe that moments like this will be a great source of energy for us to apply ourselves.

MS FURNESS: This moment has been going on for four years now, in the sense of the Royal Commission.

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Mmm.

MS FURNESS: If it were to be the motivating force that you describe, would it not be expected that in the last few years there was significant rather than incremental change?
BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, I think that the changes that have happened, as I observe them, in other churches in Australia have been significant. I mean, there have been significant moments. I've just listened to some this morning. Some of those have been the result of the Royal Commission, and some of those have been the result of the bishops applying themselves to what is an urgent matter in their own diocese.

Notwithstanding, I admit that the changes are not at the pace that they ought to be and not at the intensity that they ought to be, and I think we have some way yet to go. But I have seen not just incremental change but significant change, and change in attitude.

MS FURNESS: What is the impetus you believe is necessary for it to change at a greater pace?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: I think that we need to share, as a Church, the wrongdoing that has happened, the sufferings that are apparent amongst those who are survivors or victims, or whatever word you wish to use, to recognise as a group, as an entire national Church, just how awful and how dreadful this has been, but to move on from that and to do whatever is necessary to make sure that it never happens again.

I believe that the synod that is coming up - a synod is a magnificent opportunity not just for bishops or priests to talk but also for laypeople to be involved, and from the grassroots up. I think our people are going to tell us that they want better leadership than they are getting, and I hope that together we can build that leadership.

MS FURNESS: When you say "we need to share, as a Church, the wrongdoing that has happened", you haven't done that yet?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, we have done it, but I think to do it nationally, with a strategy attached to it. I mean, we have done it on several occasions. There are numerous bishops individually and the Australian Catholic Bishops themselves who have made statements - sorry, the plenary, that has made statements apologising.

But I think we are all in a state of shock, in
a sense. There have been numerous tremors that started, as you say, four years ago. I was here on the first day of the latest sessions, and I heard those figures. Like every other bishop, it was another tremor to see a complete picture nationally. We may know what is going on in our own church, or maybe even the church next door, but to see it nationally, to see the picture as clearly painted as it is, has been a tremor and a shock for all of us and, I think, a great awakening.

MS FURNESS: There may be those in the community, bishop, who are surprised to hear you say that the shock is a recent one in relation to those figures, when there have been claims coming in for 30 years now.

BISHOP SAUNDERS: There is a difference between hearing piecemeal figures from this place or from that place or from there and then, on the other hand, to see it all collated together, and that's simply what I mean.

MS FURNESS: You mean the sheer numbers as indicated in the claims data which was produced?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: That's correct.

MS FURNESS: And that's what is shocking?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, no, as I said before, there is much more hurt in the community that we have recognised. But the extent of it is something that - the extent of it is - for the first time, I see it now in the numbers that were printed the other day. We have always understood that there has been a terrible happening in the Church in Australia and that people have been grievously hurt; injustices have been done. We have all of us, I think - certainly myself, anyway - sat with victims of child abuse, and it strikes deeply into your heart to listen to the story of a person, somebody that you know, even somebody that you have just met. There is a difference between that and looking at a collation of figures. That's all I was trying to say.

MS FURNESS: By "collation of figures", you mean the number of claims that alleged priests or clergy have sexually abused one or more child?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Yes, that's what I mean.
MS FURNESS: You heard Bishop Hurley's evidence in relation to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and what he has done. Have you done anything similar in your diocese?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, no, I haven't. The general practice for reconciliation in our diocese is to use the second rite, which is as he described, I think. Actually, the second rite goes a bit further. There is a public examination of conscience, scripture readings, so it is a liturgical moment, and then the individual confessions take place in the open, but obviously people are distanced from each other.

MS FURNESS: So in full sight, with supervision, in relation to children; is that right?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Yes, and adults, yes.

MS FURNESS: Now, just turning to the redress scheme which the Commonwealth has indicated it will introduce, have you formed a view as to whether your diocese should be part of that scheme?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: I think it's absolutely essential.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Perhaps if I can now turn to you, bishop. Would you tell the Royal Commission your full name?

BISHOP TARABAY: Antoine-Charbel Tarabay.

MS FURNESS: And your position?

BISHOP TARABAY: Maronite Bishop of Australia.

MS FURNESS: Perhaps you could say that again somewhat slower?

BISHOP TARABAY: Maronite Bishop of Australia.

MS FURNESS: The Maronite is an eastern rite eparchy?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Perhaps you could explain to us what that means?
BISHOP TARABAY: In the Catholic Church, we have eastern Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Some of the eastern Churches are sui juris, which means they have their autonomy, and we have the Code of Canon Law, the eastern Code of Canon Law.

To give a much better and easier picture to understand, the Church is like a tree. We have a branch, a substantial, big branch, which is the Roman Catholic Church, and we have 23 small Churches, which are the eastern Churches.

MS FURNESS: What is different about the way the eastern Churches practise?

BISHOP TARABAY: When it comes to the eastern Churches - and I can talk for the Maronite Church - we have four, I will say, significant differences. Firstly, the way that we worship, our liturgy, is different from the Roman Catholic Church. In the liturgy, we still use the Aramaic, the Syriac, which is the ancient language.

The second difference is the history, because for the Maronite Church we have our own history starting in the end of the 4th century, beginning of the 5th century with a patron saint, the Father of the Maronite Church, St Maroun. This is something that we have different to the other Churches. However, when it comes to the history of the Church, the whole Church is aware of the existence of the eastern Churches.

The last one, when it comes to the Code of Canon Law, we have the western Code of Canon Law and we have the eastern Code of Canon Law. Especially in the eastern Code of Canon Law, we have the particular rule for the Maronite Church, in which it is clear that the head of the Church is the patriarch, and also we have in our Church the regulation and the Code of Canon Law for married priests.

MS FURNESS: So priests can be married within the Maronites?

BISHOP TARABAY: Since the beginning of the Maronite Church, we have had the tradition of the married men to become priests and to serve in parishes. This concept continues all throughout the history of the Maronite
Church. Up to the beginning of the 20th century, 90 per cent, almost 90 per cent, of the clergy serving in parishes were married men. After that, we started to have some candidates for the priesthood to opt for celibate life to become priests, as diocesan priests, and to serve in the parishes.

MS FURNESS: Do you have any understanding as to why those candidates were taking a different view?

BISHOP TARABAY: Firstly, I will say in the Maronite Church, we have also the monastic tradition, which is that if anyone would like to opt for celibate life, he will go to the monastery and will live in the monastery with a community of monks. And those who would like to serve in the parishes, most likely, the tradition will encourage them to be married priests - to be married men and to prepare themselves to become priests.

So the idea of having celibate priests is there. However, I believe it was influenced by the practice in the Roman Catholic Church that we started having diocesan celibate priests in our churches.

MS FURNESS: You say that the tradition will encourage them to be married priests. Why is it considered that it's preferable for them to be married priests, those people serving in the parishes?

BISHOP TARABAY: Since the beginning of the Church, if we go back to the tradition of St Peter, he was a married man. Following that tradition of St Peter, in the eastern Churches, it was developed to have this tradition of married priests to serve in the parishes.

MS FURNESS: I think you have said that you don't have any schools that operate within the Maronites; is that right?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes, that's correct.

MS FURNESS: Do you have anything similar to CatholicCare or an arm of the Church that carries out social services?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes. We are developing an agency called MaroniteCare for that purpose.

MS FURNESS: Do you also have parish-based activities that
involve children?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes. In our parishes, we have activities for children, especially during Saturday and Sunday, and we have different groups of children coming to the parishes for that reason.

MS FURNESS: I think you follow Towards Healing?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes, we do.

MS FURNESS: Have you had many complaints in relation to allegations against Maronites?

BISHOP TARABAY: Only one complaint. After I became bishop in 2013, a few months later we received one complaint, in October 2013.

MS FURNESS: What happened with that complaint?

BISHOP TARABAY: Firstly, Ms Furness, because after the verdict, there is a non-publication order, so I might ask you to guide me in answering this question.

MS FURNESS: By "verdict", do you mean in a criminal court?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: So a person was convicted?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes, the person was convicted. However, there is a non-publication order, so if you can help me answering this question, please?

MS FURNESS: In respect of his name; is that how you understand it?

BISHOP TARABAY: I'm trying to ask you to guide me how to understand the non-publication order.

THE CHAIR: It would probably be an order that covers the complainant as well as the wrongdoer, and that would be to protect the name of the complainant. So no names, and no locations, either.

MS FURNESS: What happened to that priest - he was
a priest, was he?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: What happened to that priest after the court verdict?

BISHOP TARABAY: He is serving his sentence in gaol.

MS FURNESS: Have you taken any action against him?

BISHOP TARABAY: When we received the complaint, immediately we put him on leave and we informed - we were in touch with the Office of Professional Standards of the Catholic Church and we were guided by them. We informed the police, and the procedure started. So he was on leave. He has no right to practise any ministry during that time, during the investigation.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Do you have a copy of your statement with you?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes.

MS FURNESS: I think that is dated 4 November 2016?

BISHOP TARABAY: Correct.

MS FURNESS: And the contents of that are true and correct, bishop?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes, it is correct.

MS FURNESS: In paragraph 50, towards the end of your statement, you describe that most of your clergy live in a presbytery with other priest or priests, and you say that they are supervised in that they live in company with one another. Now, is it the case that they are aware, by you, that by living together they have some supervisory role over each other?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes. Let me first explain, Ms Furness, that for the clergy in the diocese at the moment, I have 54; 21 of them are married, so they live with their families at home. We adopt the policy in the diocese to try not to have a priest living alone, to have all the time two priests, three priests. In some parishes, we have six
or seven priests living together.

The idea for that is not only for supervision. The idea for that is that they will support each other in their ministry, and they will help each other and have some kind of community life, which is good for the pastoral work that they are delivering in the parishes. Of course, in every parish, there is a parish priest, the one in charge, and it is common practice that the priest in charge will report back to me about how it is going with the priest and how the life is going in the parish.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Do you, in the Maronites, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a similar way to the other panel members?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes, we do.

MS FURNESS: Do you have any requirement that there be those processes taking place in public and under supervision when it comes to children?

BISHOP TARABAY: What kinds of processes are you talking about?

MS FURNESS: Perhaps if I can show you, if we have another copy of the Sacrament of Reconciliation by Bishop Hurley - no, we don't have a copy. Perhaps I can read it to you. In his letter to the principals and parish priests, he is asking them to ensure that the Sacrament of Reconciliation in schools is celebrated in a church, in an open setting, in full view of all participants, who are supervised by staff. Is that a practice of the Maronites?

BISHOP TARABAY: Same in the parish, because we don't have schools, as you previously mentioned. When it comes to the parish and the children coming to the parish for reconciliation, it is the same procedure, yes.

MS FURNESS: Have you also given consideration to the scheme proposed by the Commonwealth in relation to redress?

BISHOP TARABAY: At the moment, we don't have any claim for redress, but we are absolutely happy to adopt the scheme.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Now, I think I omitted to ask
you, Archbishop Porteous, in relation to the redress scheme. Do you have a position in relation to whether you would wish to participate?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes, you did, actually, ask me that before, but I'm happy to repeat that I would be fully supportive of a redress scheme.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. And Bishop Long?

BISHOP LONG: Yes, indeed. Currently we don't have a cap on the financial payment to victims who come to our Office of Safeguarding and Professional Standards, so I think our system works quite well in respect of justice and fairness to victims, but certainly I would fully support the national redress scheme.

MS FURNESS: Thank you, bishop. I have nothing further, your Honour.

THE CHAIR: Commissioner Atkinson?

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Archbishop Prowse, I just want to ask you about two aspects of the Institute for Professional Standards and Safeguarding. In your statement, at point 8 you referred to its establishment in September 2015 and then on 9 March 2016 your media release.

At point 19 in your statement, you say that the establishment of the IPSS has been strongly supported by the clergy, the various agencies and the people of the archdiocese.

I just want to preface the first aspect by asking would you agree that if there is to be national leadership within the Church, that will start at the top - at the top in Australia? If there is to be national leadership of any change within the Catholic Church, that will start at the top?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Sometimes it starts at the top and moves down. Sometimes it starts locally and moves nationally. I'm thinking particularly of the formation of the Catholic Professional Standards Limited, which, in a sense, has come after somewhat of the experiences in local dioceses and also the experience of this Royal Commission.
So I think it's both of us, both the local and the national, learning from each other, but delighted that the national structure is starting to take form, because what has been needed, Commissioner, I think, is a consistency across the whole of Australia, and at the moment I'm not sure if that consistency is there in regard to standards, expectations, training and protocols. Some dioceses seem to be ahead of others, for all sorts of reasons, and I think this will help with an audit of that, to ensure that there is a standardisation of high quality across Catholic Australia.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Could I ask quite sincerely, then, what role you see for all of the archbishops in Australia in terms of leadership?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: I think we all must sign up to it. We have all signed up to it. We must speak with one voice on the national proposal here - well, the new company coming together. We must back it with finance. We must ensure that we give way to its recommendations so that when they come into a particular diocese to audit us and perhaps find deficiencies, or whatever, there is a docility in all the dioceses to be able to respond nationally. I think there is a common mind and common heart, and I believe that is already there amongst the bishops.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: When you say you think there is, have you discussed --

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: We have discussed it at length at the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, but of course it is only in more recent times, Commissioner, that a particular proposal and constitution has been put forward, yes.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: In terms of issues such as the establishment of the Institute, do you share what you have done in that regard with the other archbishops?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes. The dioceses are all linked with each other because of the new structures that we have. Our professional standards people speak to each other. I know some perhaps speak more closely with others on developing particular protocols together, learning from each other. Again, I think it's rather piecemeal and I would hope that in the times ahead, we can finesse this national discussion
so that it becomes not occasional or in this area and not that area, but consistency across the board on these important matters.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Did any of the other archbishops get back to you and say that the IPSS is wonderful and they are going to implement it in their archdioceses?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Not directly, no, I wouldn't say that, no, but I know that some of the dioceses are taking some leadership from that. We have learnt a lot from other dioceses. I think of Maitland-Newcastle and their protocols there have been very, very helpful for us. The gatherings of people and the committees, I think - it is happening but, as I say, perhaps rather piecemeal.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: The second aspect, archbishop, was that at point 14 of your statement you talked about the importance of addressing the effects of harm and the impact on survivors. I just want to ask you, as well, at point 17 and at point 19 - I will just read part of point 17:

(IPSS is the central point of contact with various other church and civil authorities and agencies.)

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: In terms of the scope of "and agencies", does that include those organisations that support victims? There is quite a number of them throughout Australia.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: I think we need to improve more on that, but, yes, there are some victims groups and victims themselves that we have deferred to. In fact, I can think of one prominent victim who is in fact on one of our advisory committees on the IPSS.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Yes, I think you mentioned him in your statement.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: I did.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Apart from individuals, what victim support groups are in contact with IPSS?
ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: It's piecemeal and it is not organised. I think that's an area - thank you for bringing that up. I think that's an area that we could do a lot more in.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Thank you. Could I just ask you, Archbishop Porteous, were you aware of this entity that was set up, the Institute for Professional Standards and Safeguarding?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I wasn't specifically. I'm aware that all dioceses have been working to set up agencies. In Tasmania, we're in the process of finalising our own, called Safer Communities, and part of the process there was to obviously look to what other dioceses were doing. So it may well have been that those who were doing the research did look at it, but I haven't been personally involved in it.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: You do mention that project in your statement. Within Tasmania, then, under your stewardship, do any of the programs that you have engage with organisations that work as victim support agencies?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: No, we haven't.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: All right. That's all I had, thank you.

JUSTICE COATE: Archbishop Prowse, your evidence to us was that you have 56 schools in your parish?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct.

JUSTICE COATE: If I have understood what you have provided to us in your statement, you are effectively the structural head of the Catholic Education Office --

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct.

JUSTICE COATE: -- in the arrangement as between the office and yourself. I'm sure you have been following in general terms the themes that have emerged from some of the work of the Commission to date, in particular, the evidence of victims and survivors who have spoken to us about cultures inside the institutions that formed barriers to those children and young people being able to report, which
included a culture of not having any open discussion about any matters relating to sex.

We have been told that victims didn't have a language, often, to report, that they were filled with guilt and shame and fear, and fear of the authority, of the individual cleric or representative of the Church. My question to you, based on that, is: in your schools, what programs are now either under development or being delivered to address those issues that are now very firmly on the table?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, your Honour, first of all, there has been a sea change, I suppose, in the fact that priests and religious, like religious sisters and brothers, are very, very few and far between in the school classroom itself. So that issue is not there.

We are now talking about largely laypeople and married couples and married people and the idea there, too, of course, the ongoing professional formation of teachers on sexuality and human growth and maturity, also involving the young people themselves, particularly to identify, as it were, suspicious behaviour of adults. There are new programs up now that are in our schools to help in an appropriate manner for children to be able to read signs of adults acting in a way that creates angst in a young person, and this can also be done on internet sort of programs as well.

I think one of our strengths, really, and changes, too, is that, as it were, a culture of fear and that sex is only to be spoken of in a particular manner and in any other way it is spoken of, it is dirty - I mean, I would hope that those days have gone and that human sexuality is presented as a great gift, a very positive gift from God, and a gradual unfolding of the appropriate expression of that.

So I do feel, say, for instance, since 1950 and certainly during the Vatican II Council and since, that there has been an enormous change in this for the positive.

JUSTICE COATE: So are you confident that those sorts of programs addressed in particular to the barriers that have been well and truly identified throughout the research - are you confident that those programs are being delivered
in each of the 56 schools in your parish?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: In the diocese, yes, I am, your Honour. I am quite confident about that and delight with the great competence of the education office to supervise and audit that and to give proper training to the teachers providing this service.

JUSTICE COATE: Are they programs that are being delivered by the teachers with particular training in those skills?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Looking at it panoramically, it is by the teachers, but in many cases with the parents of the children, and also some of our lay leaders that are employed directly by the archdiocese going around as resource people into the schools on human life and sexuality and not only upgrading the teachers but also providing resources and assistance to school communities to be able to respond adequately to this important area.

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: Bishop Long, you represent one of the fastest growing areas of Sydney, in fact of Australia, in terms of the Church and young people in the Parramatta Diocese. You would be aware that the Vatican has signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which says that the best interests of the child must be paramount in organisations that have signed, and it is consistent with much of the statements by the Pope, Pope Francis.

Yet it is not a language that we have heard in many of the panels or even this panel at all, and much of the discussion has been about the priests and their slow acceptance of these matters, but in a way that I understand, and we’ve talked about the Church’s response.

Do you have any thoughts about how the Church will actually frame itself as a Church that puts the interests of children genuinely ahead of other competing interests within the Church?

BISHOP LONG: Yes, I think, Commissioner, if the Church is a good global citizen, then it has to show that the safety and protection of the innocent children must be of paramount interest, of absolute priority.

In order to make it happen, I do believe that there
needs to be a holistic, comprehensive approach. In other words, it has to be at all levels of the governance structure of the Church, be it local, diocesan or universal.

For instance, as I alluded to before, the problem of clericalism can't just be addressed at a diocesan level. It has to be addressed as the whole Church because the whole Church is embroiled in a certain model of being Church, whether Church as a communio, which Vatican II enunciated and pointed to, or the Church as a perfect society, which is not just no longer relevant but can contribute to the abetting of the sexual abuse precisely because of the attendant issue of clericalism, which is integral to that model of Church.

So we need to have a holistic and comprehensive approach in order to move forward. My hope is that we would come to the model of Church that is not only relevant for today's society but also life giving and, above all, consistent with the message of the gospel.

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: Bishop Saunders, just related to that, you indicated that one has to understand the people that are in your Church, the priests and that, and one appreciates the slowness to change, but do you think, given that the Church has made a commitment to the protection of children and the importance of children more generally, that reluctant priests generally around Australia will, in fact, remove or release some of that reluctance or resistance in favour of protecting and advancing the interests of children, or is that a concept that may not resonate with many of the priests in your own diocese and generally?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Speaking from the point of view of the Kimberley, where I come from, I would have no lack of cooperation from clergy at all.

In terms of the Church elsewhere, I don't detect privately, or from any other sources, clergy saying that they are not interested in protecting the rights of children or they are not going to join any program that does that. I was referring more to the matter of the abuse of authority in clericalism and the stamp of authority upon a community which isn't necessarily healthy, whereby a person who may be a parish priest could take it upon
themselves to be the final court of disputed returns and, not only that, but the one who runs everything. That's not the sort of Church that we are trying to build.

The matter of child protection - I don't know of any parish priest who would say they are not interested in that.

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: But if I just push that one little bit further, if I can, there is a connectedness between the two, so the safeguarding in relation to children - does it not depend on a reflection of and change in practice in relation to the issues like clericalism that we have talked about, the way in which priests exercise authority? They are not unrelated to the protection and advancement of children's rights and wellbeing?

BISHOP SAUNDERS: Well, the degree to which they are I think would be a matter of some conjecture and debate. At the very least I think that the matter of clericalism in our ranks needs to be carefully investigated.

Often what I have seen as clericalism is priests who simply do not want to share authority, as such, and who run their parishes as a totalitarian regime. That doesn't necessarily mean that they are not interested in the welfare of children.

Now, the connectedness between a martinet or a person who runs a totalitarian regime and the abuse of children - certainly we would think that that has happened. But the other point is that today there are so many protocols in place that, please God, that would make that very difficult. Notwithstanding the fact of the necessity to change the model of Church that we have in order to be a healthy Church and healthier Church. I don't know if I'm making my point.

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: Yes, you are, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Needham?

MS NEEDHAM: Would your Honour mind if I spoke from there so I can see all the bishops, if Ms Furness doesn't mind?

THE CHAIR: No, that's fine.
<EXAMINATION BY MS NEEDHAM:

MS NEEDHAM: I have some questions for Archbishop Prowse. Archbishop, you were asked some questions about the clerical influence in seminaries. Now, I think you are on the council advising the Archbishop of Sydney in relation to the Sydney seminary; is that correct?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct, for the last year, yes.

MS NEEDHAM: Do your seminarians attend that seminary?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: They do.

MS NEEDHAM: What is your role in relation to advising the archbishop there in relation to those kinds of cultural issues?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: The archbishop's mandate to the committee we now have is to review what is happening in general, across the board of the seminary, and to advise him on areas that seem to be going well, areas that could be improved upon.

MS NEEDHAM: In your view, are there any areas that could be improved upon in the Sydney seminary?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes. An area came up in regard to the study program and being at different venues, which was causing practical problems for the seminarians to gather together more frequently in the one place at the seminary. That was a major concern, which we are still looking at, and we're about to produce a report to the archbishop.

On other areas, we asked the different - well, the rector of the seminary is always present, but to review what is happening. In general, I think the group of people there - some are clerics but some are laywomen there, that are quite expert in certain areas - generally, we were finding that the seminary there is in a very healthy state.

MS NEEDHAM: Do you attend the seminary to carry out your functions?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: The meetings are held at the seminary and wherever I can I try to get there the night before. I like to visit my own seminarians and then I might be
celebrating the mass and then mixing with the seminarians over the meal table.

Last year, for instance, also, they asked me to lead a small retreat and there was some good interaction there. It's a very international seminary by way of origins, national origins, and I felt that it was reflecting the multicultural nature of Australia.

MS NEEDHAM: Have you observed any signs of what I could term creeping clericalism at that particular seminary?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Well, I probably haven't been there long enough to be able to discuss that - to be able to observe that. But, I mean, no, I must say that I didn't, and if I did find it, it would probably be somebody who was sort of strutting about, sort of feeling that because they happened to be wearing something, that they are more important than others - those subtle signs of abuse of power. I didn't notice that, but I haven't been there long enough to be able to detect that.

THE CHAIR: Archbishop, do you think it would only just turn up in, as you say, someone strutting around, or do you need, rather, to think about the whole of the culture in which they are operating?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, and the culture is very interactive with the home dioceses, your Honour, with the pastoral years and what have you.

THE CHAIR: But, forgive me, that's not really the issue. It is the way they will ultimately interact with laypeople, isn't it? That's what matters.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

THE CHAIR: So what matters is the culture that is being developed in the institution in relation to the way they are perceived when they go into parish life.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Have you addressed that issue?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Not yet, but, given the insights of the Royal Commission, I would like to look into that more
fully, thank you.

MS NEEDHAM: And you are also currently the administrator of the Diocese of Wagga Wagga?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, just over the last few months I have been.

MS NEEDHAM: And that's a temporary appointment until a bishop is appointed; is that right?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, the former bishop has resigned due to ill health and we now wait for the Pope to appoint a new bishop, and in the interregnum I have been asked to be the apostolic administrator.

MS NEEDHAM: Has that been for the last four months?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes, it has.

MS NEEDHAM: Have you, in that time, visited the Wagga seminary?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: I have once, for an extended afternoon and evening. Only once, though.

MS NEEDHAM: Are you in a position to make or recommend changes, if necessary, to the Wagga seminary?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: No, I wouldn't think I would have the authority to do that just at the moment, but I would like to, in the times ahead, be able to visit there a bit more often. I have been in touch with the rector there through correspondence and what have you.

MS NEEDHAM: Thank you. You were also asked some questions about your non-attendance at the Marist College liturgy of lament.

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Yes.

MS NEEDHAM: Is it the case that you refused to go to that?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: No, I didn't refuse to go to it. Some of my senior priests went to it. I was very keen to engage the whole diocese on this important area, and I -
hindsight, though, I did make a mistake. I should have been there and I publicly apologised and asked forgiveness for it.

MS NEEDHAM: And was that the media release dated 11 November which you published?

ARCHBISHOP PROWSE: Correct.

MS NEEDHAM: Thank you. Now, Archbishop Porteous, you gave evidence that your seminarians attended the Corpus Christi seminary in Melbourne; is that correct?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: That's correct, yes.

MS NEEDHAM: You gave some evidence about a psychologist being in-house. Are you aware of any other screening process that goes on in that seminary?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: Yes. My reference to the psychologist before was in relation to Sydney. So with regard to Melbourne, I have actually for a long time had a great confidence in the processes that are in place in Melbourne. They have some very thorough-going sessions to deal with growth in sexual maturity and so on. The processes in the seminary itself - I think there is a very high quality of pastoral oversight from formation staff. So all of my experience with Melbourne has been very, very positive and gives me a great deal of confidence in the programs that are in place in that seminary.

MS NEEDHAM: And are you aware of the Vitality service provided by Dr Robinson who gave evidence earlier in these proceedings?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: I've been aware of it because that was in Sydney, yes, when I was in Sydney, yes.

MS NEEDHAM: Are you aware of her service having any role in the Melbourne seminary?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: No, no, I would not be familiar with that.

MS NEEDHAM: Now, you were asked some questions about the Safe Communities program, or I think you mentioned that in an answer. Would you be able to tell the Commissioners a
little more about that program, which I think is yet to be
launched?

ARCHBISHOP PORTEOUS: That's correct. In the process
particularly of the last four years - and I've only been in
the position of archbishop for three years, so in the last
three years - with the Royal Commission occurring, I've
been watching and certainly listening, and that has been
a process that has encouraged me to look at our own
processes.

We've done a number of things in the Archdiocese.
We've introduced, for example, an online management tool.
We currently have 707 people, I think, doing that, and part
of that includes issues around sexuality and sexual abuse
and so on, and harassment. It's broader than just sexual
abuse. So we've introduced that. That has been running
now for I think well over a year.

We have looked at the question of receiving priests
from overseas, and conscious that priests can come from
very different cultural backgrounds and I'm very aware that
their images of priesthood can be quite different because
of their cultural background. So certainly when I've been
speaking to them individually I've been emphasising the
nature of priestly ministry. I've been, again, talking to
them specifically about the spirit of service and, as well
as that, we've been developing an enculturation program in
the diocese, and part of that has been sessions with our
professional standards officer in which they are taken
through in some detail professional standards, Integrity in
Ministry and Towards Healing. So they are fully familiar
with those programs.

I've also sent priests over to Melbourne. Melbourne
also run a program for new overseas priests, so I've sent
priests over to do that one-week program as well. So I've
been trying to be fairly active in ensuring that priests
who come from overseas are well prepared or have an
understanding of the cultural differences in Australia and
the expectations of them in various areas.

Then one of the major works, though, has been working
towards the establishment of a program across the whole of
the Archdiocese of Hobart.

A couple of things I was very keen to do were,
firstly, to not only have our official agencies but every agency that is related to the Catholic Church - so we have the L'Arche community, for instance, so every community - now, we've been involved in discussions with them to consult with them about what programs they have in place. Gradually we're putting together a comprehensive program where we've consulted every agency in the diocese. So we have an umbrella, and that establishes principles across the diocese, and then every organisation within the diocese can test their own individual protocols against this program.

We are using the material that came forth last year from the Royal Commission, the 10 points. We've used that as our template for the actual document. We're close to getting it finished. It's just with all the consultation and obviously linking it with all the various legal requirements in Tasmanian law and Commonwealth law, we're trying to bring the whole thing together, so hopefully we'll have that ready in the next couple of months.

MS NEEDHAM: Thank you, archbishop. Now, Bishop Tarabay, if I can turn to you, your Church serves the Lebanese community; is that correct?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes.

MS NEEDHAM: Where do your priests from overseas come from?

BISHOP TARABAY: First, let me explain that the Maronite community, the large majority of the community come from Lebanese ancestry, but we have, like, especially recently, some families coming from Syria that are Maronite, and other families from Egypt, where we have Maronites as well, but small communities. But the large majority of our priests, they are currently serving, coming from Lebanon.

At some stage, after I became bishop, I worked to change that policy, to looking into encouraging vocation from within the community here, to continue the service in the diocese.

MS NEEDHAM: And when you do have priests who were born overseas and ordained overseas and come to Australia, what programs do you have or what assistance do you have for them in dealing with cultural issues in Australia?
BISHOP TARABAY: Firstly, unlike the situation in the other dioceses, the priests, the Maronite priests, coming to serve in Australia, they are coming to serve in the same Church and the same community. In the Maronite Church, we don't have the diversity that other priests might encounter in other parishes and other dioceses. So it is the same community. This is first.

Secondly, we are very keen to make the induction of the new priest coming from overseas. I would say this is - it is not happening much during my time. Like in three years as bishop, I have had two priests only coming, and both of them, they have served here before. So they are not completely new to the community here.

However, we are very keen in the diocese to guide them and to make the induction with them into especially the Integrity in Ministry, which is first - it comes first - and also when it comes to the Australian way of life regarding taxation, regarding other matters, way of living, banking, all of that. So it is a whole induction.

And we have to make the effort, which we are doing with my office - we are translating some of these documents into Arabic to make sure that, from the beginning, the priest coming from overseas with little knowledge of English will be able to understand what we are talking about, especially when it comes to working with children.

MS NEEDHAM: Thank you. Are you aware of the evidence given by Dr Robinson last week as to her screening of some of the seminarians for the Maronite Church?

BISHOP TARABAY: Yes, I am.

MS NEEDHAM: Are you aware that the effect of her evidence was, and I quote, "The Maronites are doing something right"?

BISHOP TARABAY: I thank her for that.

MS NEEDHAM: Are you aware of whether her screening related to married priests, celibate priests or both?

BISHOP TARABAY: Both. At the moment, we have nine. Two of them are opting for celibate priesthood. They started
their seminary in Wagga and now we decided to have them nearby in Sydney, and I'm very grateful to Bishop Vincent Long, that he accepted them into his seminary, into the Holy Spirit Seminary, in Parramatta.

She assessed these two candidates. Both of them have finished university before I accepted them into the seminary. So they are very much ready for seminary and they understand what is the requirement of priesthood.

The rest, seven of them, are married. So instead of having seminary life, we will have, like, regular meetings and seminars and in-services with them to introduce them to mainly the liturgy and the service in the parishes and the dioceses. So the assessment for the nine, and I believe she was very impressed with the married candidates for the priesthood in our eparchy.

MS NEEDHAM: Thank you. Bishop Long, you made reference to your diocese's response to child sexual abuse within the diocese, which I think is called Healing and Support; is that correct?

BISHOP LONG: That is one part of our response, yes.

MS NEEDHAM: Would you be able to give the Commission a short outline of the response in Parramatta to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse?

BISHOP LONG: I would like to preface my response by saying that I came from Melbourne. I was an Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne before moving to Parramatta as an ordinary, and I met with many victims who had gone through the Melbourne Response and were profoundly dissatisfied with the way they had been treated.

I met many, many victims - some in their home, some in the different places - and the encounters with those victims really moved me. I mean, there was an incident where a father and two adult sons recounted their experience, and watching these grown men weep, and weep bitterly, really had a strong impact on me. I asked myself, how can I look these victims in the eyes and say I share your pain, I share your suffering, without doing anything in my power to bring about justice, dignity and healing for them?
So I became very determined that this must be my priority, especially as an ordinary in the diocese, to ensure that victims receive justice, receive respect, receive dignity, receive all that is due to them.

And so when I came to Parramatta, I wanted to implement that, and I can say with a degree of confidence that the victims who have had recourse to our system, to our Office of Safeguarding and Professional Standards, are treated with dignity, respect and, most of all, justice.

The Healing and Support team is one way to ensure that the victims are properly assisted, accompanied, that there isn't a legal shield that prevents them from accessing justice and dignity.

I must say that the victims who have gone through our system are, by and large, satisfied with the way we have treated them. I sat with nine victims and listened to their stories and all nine of them conveyed their appreciation and gratitude. That's not to say that I can be complacent about it, but I just want to ensure that victims who come to our diocese, come to our system, do experience, genuinely, healing, justice and dignity.

MS NEEDHAM: Do you take the view that your own personal experience, which we have heard about, as a refugee transiting through a Malaysian refugee camp - has that informed in any way your response to the victims of child sexual abuse?

BISHOP LONG: I think it does. I think we are all products of our life experiences and being a refugee provides me with that particular vantage point through which I form relationships with people, I evaluate their individuality, their personal stories, their dignity.

I was also a victim of sexual abuse by clergy when I first came to Australia, even though I was an adult, so that had a powerful impact on me and how I want to, you know, walk in the shoes of other victims and really endeavour to attain justice and dignity for them.

MS NEEDHAM: Thank you, Bishop Long. No further questions.

MS FURNESS: Nothing further, your Honour.
THE CHAIR: May they all be excused?

MS FURNESS: Yes.

THE CHAIR: You are all excused. Before you go, can I thank each of you for joining with us today. Some of you have travelled a great distance.

The work that we have done over, now, four years, of course, has concerned or is concerned with a great many institutions throughout Australia, not just the Catholic Church, but I'm sure it's apparent to all of you, and others, that the numbers, if nothing else, tell us that there is a story that needed to be looked at with the Church, with your Church, in detail, and that not only is it necessary for us to understand, but it's more important, perhaps, that you understand what has been taking place and come, with all of your colleagues, to determine the way forward. So thank you again. You are excused.

THE WITNESSES WITHDREW

MS FURNESS: Your Honour, perhaps just before we adjourn, could I tender a bundle of documents which are the policies and procedures described in the statement tender bundle, which I tendered this morning.

THE CHAIR: That will be exhibit 50-011.

MS FURNESS: There is one exception to that, which is tab 539, which is not tendered.

THE CHAIR: Very well. Tomorrow morning at 10?

MS FURNESS: Yes, your Honour.

THE CHAIR: Who do we have tomorrow?

MS FURNESS: We have the heads of the various religious institutes.

THE CHAIR: The institutes. Yes, very well. We will adjourn until then.

AT 3.40PM THE COMMISSION WAS ADJOURNED TO WEDNESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 10AM
nearby [1] - 25802:2
nearly [1] - 25776:37, 25777:14
need [1] - 25779:31
neediness [1] - 25812:34
Needham [1] - 25812:41
nez [1] - 25812:14
negative [1] - 25767:28, 25767:30
neighbour [1] - 25765:40...
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