

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL  
RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Public Hearing - Case Study 50  
(Day 254)

Level 17, Governor Macquarie Tower  
1 Farrer Place, Sydney

On Thursday, 23 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

1 MS FURNESS: Thank you, your Honour. Today we have three  
2 witnesses. Baroness Hollins is via videolink from London.  
3 Each are members of the Pontifical Commission for the  
4 Protection of Minors. Perhaps if I can give a short  
5 introduction to that Commission before Baroness Hollins is  
6 sworn in, your Honour?

7  
8 THE CHAIR: Perhaps we might get her sworn so she can sit  
9 down.

10  
11 <SHEILA HOLLINS, sworn: [8.03am]

12  
13 <WILLIAM FRANCIS KILGALLON, sworn: [8.03am]

14  
15 <KATHLEEN VERA McCORMACK, sworn: [8.03am]

16  
17 <EXAMINATION BY MS FURNESS:

18  
19 MS FURNESS: Thank you, your Honour. In March 2014  
20 Pope Francis established the Pontifical Commission for  
21 the Protection of Minors. The Pope appointed  
22 Cardinal Sean O'Malley, Archbishop of Boston, as President  
23 of the Pontifical Commission.

24  
25 The Commission's statutes describe its role as  
26 a purely advisory body at the service of the Pope for the  
27 purposes of promoting local responsibility in the  
28 particular churches for the protection of all minors and  
29 vulnerable adults. The statutes also describe the  
30 composition of the Pontifical Commission as a maximum of  
31 18 members and a president appointed by the Pope for  
32 a period of three years.

33  
34 The Commission initially comprised nine members. In  
35 December 2014, Pope Francis added eight members, bringing  
36 a total of 17 members, with 16 currently being active.

37  
38 There are eight women and nine men, both clerical and  
39 lay, on the Commission and members come from a variety of  
40 countries, including the United Kingdom, Australia,  
41 Britain, Columbia, New Zealand and others. The group  
42 includes two survivors of child sexual abuse within the  
43 Catholic Church.

44  
45 As your Honour and Commissioners might recall,  
46 Ms McCormack was scheduled to give evidence in the first  
47 week of the hearing and unfortunately she was unwell, but

1 has recovered sufficiently to join us today and we're very  
2 grateful for Baroness Hollins and Mr Kilgallon to also join  
3 us today.  
4

5 Perhaps if I can start with you, Baroness, you've been  
6 a member of the Commission for the Protection of Minors  
7 since 2014?  
8

9 THE CHAIR: Ms Furness, I think we need a name?  
10

11 MS FURNESS: I beg your pardon. Your full name, Baroness?  
12

13 BARONESS HOLLINS: It's Sheila Hollins. My full title is  
14 Professor Sheila the Baroness Hollins.  
15

16 MS FURNESS: Thank you. You've been a member of the papal  
17 Commission for the Protection of Minors since 2014?  
18

19 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes, that's right.  
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21 MS FURNESS: And you've done a deal of work in relation to  
22 the protection of minors for most of your working life?  
23

24 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes, I've been a clinical psychiatrist  
25 for 30 years and a psychotherapist with victims and  
26 perpetrators of abuse, and was involved in identifying  
27 abused children and adults in the 1980s.  
28

29 My particular focus has been on children and adults  
30 with intellectual disabilities. That has been my  
31 particular focus for probably 22 of those years.  
32

33 I'm also the Chair of the Scientific Advisory Group of  
34 the Centre for Child Protection at the Gregorian University  
35 in Rome, and another aspect of my curriculum vitae is that  
36 I was a researcher working - I ran a psychotherapy group  
37 for people with intellectual disabilities who had been  
38 abused and/or had abused others, which was a psychotherapy  
39 treatment group, which actually ran for 18 years altogether  
40 and involved quite a lot of clinical research and teaching  
41 on the subject.  
42

43 MS FURNESS: Thank you. You provided to us a statement  
44 responding to various questions that the Royal Commission  
45 set out?  
46

47 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes.

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MS FURNESS: And you have a copy of that with you, Baroness?

BARONESS HOLLINS: I do.

MS FURNESS: Your Honour, that appears behind tab 43 of the hearing bundle.

Do you have it with you, Baroness?

BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes. Mine I printed off myself this morning, all of these papers, so they may not be in the same order as yours.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. How was it that you came to be appointed a member of the Commission?

BARONESS HOLLINS: I was asked by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, who is now Emeritus Cardinal in England and Wales, if I would accompany him to Ireland as part of a Vatican visitation to the Catholic Church in Ireland, in response to concerns about the way in which the response of the Irish Church was taking place.

I spent three weeks with Cardinal Cormac in Ireland. He was very keen that there be a woman who had some clinical knowledge and experience of victims and survivors of sexual abuse - not necessarily within the Church - who would be able to support him in listening to the people that he was planning to meet in Ireland. We basically met, I would say, hundreds of people, including many, many victim survivors, their families, priests and religious, and we had several meetings with the bishops in Ireland as well.

Our particular visitation was one of five, the visitation which he was leading. I was accompanying him in the Diocese of Armagh and involved in assisting him with preparing his report at the end of that, and it was after that that I was asked if I would speak at a conference in Rome, at the Gregorian University, about the effects on children, the long-term, the long-lasting effects on victims of abuse.

My response to that invitation, after discussing it with the person who invited me, was to say that I would be

1 willing to do that, but only if they would also invite  
2 a victim survivor to accompany me.

3  
4 After some considerable discussion, it was agreed that  
5 I should identify somebody who would be willing to come  
6 with me so that we could prepare a joint submission,  
7 a joint presentation, and we did that.

8  
9 I think it was a very important event, because the  
10 conference had been organised for bishops and religious  
11 superiors from around the world - all the bishops  
12 conferences were asked to send a representative - and  
13 I think there were probably about 230 people there.

14  
15 There were a lot of concerns about having a victim  
16 survivor present and speaking to priests and a feeling that  
17 this would be too difficult. But, anyway, I asked  
18 Marie Collins from Dublin to accompany me. I didn't know  
19 her before, but I did some research to find out who would  
20 be a very good voice to really be the leading voice in our  
21 presentation, she had a remarkable impact on the bishops  
22 who were there.

23  
24 I think one of the people who had been involved at  
25 that time was Monsignor Scicluna, who is now the Bishop in  
26 Malta, but for 10 years he was the promoter of justice in  
27 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and he had  
28 done some very, very good work to really try to speed up  
29 the Vatican's response.

30  
31 It was after that that I began to be contacted by  
32 Monsignor Oliver, who is now the Secretary of the  
33 Pontifical Commission, to discuss with me the idea that  
34 there might be a Pontifical Commission and to talk to me  
35 about the sorts of things which might be important. So  
36 that's basically how I came, and also how Marie Collins  
37 came, to be a member - because of our presentation at that  
38 event.

39  
40 MS FURNESS: What is the purpose of the Commission,  
41 Baroness?

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43 BARONESS HOLLINS: It is advisory to the Holy Father and  
44 the idea is that we should advise him on the policies and  
45 the educational programs that will try to ensure that  
46 children and vulnerable adults throughout the world,  
47 wherever the Catholic Church is working - that those

1 policies and educational programs will be in place to make  
2 the Church a safer place. It was for us to recommend  
3 whatever policies, whatever we felt needed to change,  
4 needed to take place, in order that the Church would be  
5 more responsive and better able to support people who have  
6 been abused as well as to prevent it.

7  
8 MS FURNESS: Do you - that is, the members of the  
9 Commission - advise the Pope directly or is there some  
10 intermediate group of people or individual within the  
11 Vatican with whom you deal?

12  
13 BARONESS HOLLINS: We advise the Holy Father directly  
14 through the president, Cardinal O'Malley, who meets with  
15 him regularly. We've all had the opportunity to meet the  
16 Pope, Pope Francis. We believe that he is going to be  
17 coming to one of our meetings this year, but we don't know  
18 the details of that yet. Normally, at the end of a meeting  
19 we have decided and prepared proposals, and when our  
20 proposals are ready, they go to the Holy Father directly  
21 through our president.

22  
23 MS FURNESS: Is the work of the Commission primarily  
24 through its working groups?

25  
26 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes, I would say that - well, the work  
27 of the Commission - we have spent some time - in your  
28 introduction, you talked about the statutes having been  
29 prepared in advance. That was the implication. It's not  
30 quite true. There was a lot of work discussing the  
31 statutes during the first year, before the Commission was  
32 fully up and running, and we identified the nature and  
33 purpose of our work and identified the areas that we wanted  
34 to work on, and the areas that we were keen to work on were  
35 too many; there were too many areas. In a sense, we came  
36 up with a lot of quite small issues, which became quite  
37 exhausting to work on.

38  
39 So we rationalised in the second year, when the full  
40 Commission was there, to have six working groups, and it  
41 has become much more efficient and effective, I think,  
42 because we've been working in working groups where any  
43 proposals are developed and then taken to the plenary  
44 meeting, where they can then be discussed and debated and  
45 agreed by the full Commission. So the idea is that they  
46 would be prepared in advance of the meeting and then  
47 brought to the whole Commission to formalise. And when

1 they've been voted on, they can then go to the Holy Father,  
2 but they need to be well worked up and prepared before that  
3 can happen.

4  
5 MS FURNESS: What do you see as the most significant area  
6 of work of the Commission?

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8 BARONESS HOLLINS: Personally, I think healing and - well,  
9 it's all important. It's all really important, but  
10 I personally - and it's because of my work as  
11 a psychiatrist and psychotherapist - I personally think the  
12 healing and care for victims and survivors is of critical  
13 importance.

14  
15 One of the reasons I say that is because, in fact, if  
16 we are able to accompany, to be with, victim survivors and  
17 support them in all aspects of their recovery and their  
18 lives, it's actually going to make it easier, I think,  
19 also, to protect children in the future, because there will  
20 be better understanding through having had the courage to  
21 actually understand and hear what survivors have to say.

22  
23 MS FURNESS: Are you doing research work in that area?

24  
25 BARONESS HOLLINS: Are we doing research? We're not doing  
26 research. Unlike the Royal Commission, which commissioned  
27 research, I wouldn't call it research. I'm an academic.  
28 We have met with people who have advised us. We have read  
29 a lot. We have considered very carefully, from what we've  
30 read and what we've heard, what we think the important  
31 issues are.

32  
33 MS FURNESS: What are those important issues?

34  
35 BARONESS HOLLINS: Well, for example, one of the most  
36 important things is that there is some transparency and  
37 openness and that people are treated with respect and  
38 listened to. One of the typical responses of bishops when  
39 somebody does make an allegation - and, of course, remember  
40 that most people make allegations very late. I think the  
41 average - you know, it depends where you are, and so on,  
42 but it might be as many as 30 years before somebody  
43 actually makes an allegation or has the courage to do so,  
44 and when they do, it's often as a result of hearing about  
45 another case.

46  
47 And this happened when I was in Ireland. I met many

1 people who were getting on with their lives and had perhaps  
2 had not even told their wife about it or their husband  
3 about it, and then something happened, something came out  
4 in the news and they would break down. So here's somebody  
5 having a breakdown, and perhaps they themselves don't  
6 understand why they are actually not coping well, why they  
7 have started having emotional difficulties, and it's quite  
8 a crisis in people's lives. Not to be believed is really,  
9 really difficult.

10  
11 But then what often seems to happen is that there are  
12 legal issues around compensation, around deciding whether  
13 or not the allegation is a true allegation; there are  
14 issues around the possibility that the person who abused  
15 them is no longer alive; in some countries there's a  
16 statute of limitations which says that 30 years is too  
17 long - all of those things.

18  
19 Then there is counselling which is offered. In some  
20 countries there is quite sophisticated counselling and  
21 therapy available to survivors, but in some countries there  
22 is not. The provision of mental health services in many  
23 countries is very, very scarce.

24  
25 Then, finally, the thing which is often overlooked is  
26 the spiritual needs of the survivor. A number of people  
27 have said to me that they haven't lost their faith in God,  
28 but they find it very difficult to go into a church or to  
29 go to a service in a church where there's a priest  
30 officiating, particularly if nobody has helped them to try  
31 to make sense of the spiritual aspect of their experience  
32 and their attempt to come to terms with and to live with  
33 what happened for them. So many people will have stopped  
34 going to church, because they find it too painful to be in  
35 church.

36  
37 MS FURNESS: With the learnings you've described from the  
38 work in the area of healing and care, what recommendations  
39 or advice have you given to Pope Francis in this area?

40  
41 BARONESS HOLLINS: One of the recommendations is that it's  
42 very important that when a survivor writes a letter, there  
43 should be a response. That seems fundamental, that if  
44 somebody writes a letter, there should be a response. It  
45 seems that this is a very hard thing for many Church  
46 leaders to do.

47



1 MS FURNESS: It sounds very simple, Baroness. Why is it  
2 so hard?

3  
4 BARONESS HOLLINS: Do you know, I don't think it's - I'm  
5 a psychiatrist. I've been President of the Royal College  
6 of Psychiatrists. I've been involved in teaching  
7 psychiatrists. Psychiatrists find it hard as well. It's  
8 really interesting how difficult it is to get people to be  
9 able to allow the reality of abuse and the painfulness of  
10 abuse actually to be present in their consciousness.  
11 I think, to me, from a psychological perspective, I see it  
12 almost as a denial of what's going on and what it means.

13  
14 It takes quite a lot of courage for people to actually  
15 face up to the reality of abuse and to understand that this  
16 is real, that this pain won't go away, that you can't just  
17 listen once; you have to listen and keep on listening and  
18 keep on being there, because this is long-term suffering  
19 that many people experience.

20  
21 And I think where people haven't had the sort of  
22 psychological development which will allow them to  
23 experience that kind of human emotional pain, somehow  
24 acknowledging it is - it's a form of defence, really. From  
25 a psychiatric point of view, I can understand it and I've  
26 seen it amongst many different professional groups.  
27 I mean, I've seen it in the Church but I've also seen it,  
28 I'm ashamed to say, within my own profession. So I think  
29 it's denial.

30  
31 MS FURNESS: When you say people haven't had that sort of  
32 psychological development, when speaking within the Church,  
33 are you referring primarily to bishops or those parish  
34 priests and others who might receive complaints?

35  
36 BARONESS HOLLINS: I think the psychological development -  
37 within the preparation and the formation of priests, and  
38 this would be true also, although slightly different, for  
39 people within religious communities, there are four pillars  
40 of formation. One of them is human development. I think  
41 it's the aspect of human formation which, in many  
42 seminaries, has changed and in recent years has changed to  
43 make it a much more substantial and seriously taught part  
44 of their curriculum, but in some it is not, and in the past  
45 it was certainly not, a primary focus for the development,  
46 and I do see that failure to support men who are coming  
47 into seminaries to study to become a priest - they've often

1 not been enabled and encouraged and supported to develop  
2 that aspect of themselves, that emotional maturity and  
3 emotional understanding, which I think is a very essential  
4 part of a pastoral ministry.

5  
6 And that's going to go right the way through, you  
7 know, at all levels of the priesthood and bishops. And  
8 there are some exceptional bishops who do have that  
9 emotional intelligence, but I'm afraid there are also some  
10 who haven't been encouraged and enabled to develop that  
11 emotional side of themselves.

12  
13 MS FURNESS: Have you had any recent involvement with  
14 seminaries or the way in which formation occurs now to tell  
15 us whether you think it has changed sufficiently?

16  
17 BARONESS HOLLINS: I have. I think that's an issue which  
18 is just going to be incredibly local and it's going to be  
19 culturally affected as well. So I think in some countries  
20 there have been huge changes and I think - I haven't had  
21 recent - I haven't visited a seminary for three years,  
22 I don't think, but I have spoken to the rectors of some  
23 seminaries and they speak positively about the changes  
24 they're implementing. That's in the UK. I don't know  
25 what's happening in Australia and I don't know what's  
26 happening in African countries, for example.

27  
28 This is one of the issues that the  
29 Pontifical Commission is dealing with, which is that we're  
30 concerned with the worldwide Church and the different  
31 cultural issues and the different stage of understanding of  
32 the seriousness of child abuse within institutions.

33  
34 MS FURNESS: One issue that has arisen here, Baroness, is  
35 when overseas-trained priests come to Australia, how one  
36 ensures that there is a process of, for want of a better  
37 word, enculturation, so that those priests understand the  
38 norms and values of this society in relation to child  
39 protection. Is that the sort of thing you're referring to?

40  
41 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes.

42  
43 MS FURNESS: You indicated to respond to a letter was one  
44 of the pieces of advice or recommendations you made to the  
45 Pope. Are there any others in relation to this area of  
46 healing and care?

1 BARONESS HOLLINS: One of the things that we did was to  
2 ask him if he would meet survivors. He responded and  
3 agreed to meet survivors, because we felt that this would  
4 encourage other Church leaders to do the same. So over one  
5 weekend we invited six survivors from three different  
6 countries to come, and they all had an opportunity to spend  
7 as much time with the Holy Father as they wanted; they were  
8 the ones who ended the conversation. He spent about three  
9 hours - just over three hours, I think - meeting the six  
10 survivors, and they were all very touched and moved by what  
11 he said and how he was, and he was very, very moved by  
12 their experience.

13  
14 Our hope was, and is, that when he does visit other  
15 countries, he would also be able to do the same when he does  
16 visit. So we certainly, in our first year, recommended to  
17 him that it would be very helpful and very encouraging if  
18 he was able to do that when he visits.

19  
20 What else have we recommended from that group? I'm  
21 not a member of the healing and care group now. I was for  
22 the first period, but I've been focusing my work in another  
23 area, although I have just rejoined that group. What else  
24 have we recommended? I'm not sure. Bill or Kath may be  
25 able to help me there.

26  
27 MS FURNESS: Thank you. We'll come to them, and I'm sure  
28 they've made a note of that.

29  
30 Education is a particular interest of yours as well,  
31 is it not?

32  
33 BARONESS HOLLINS: Well, Kath McCormack is the leader of  
34 the education group, but, yes, education is an area of  
35 interest of mine, particularly - and one of the areas that  
36 I am involved in is the Centre for Child Protection at the  
37 Gregorian University, which has developed an education  
38 program, which is an e-learning course. I can't tell you  
39 right now how many students there are or how many countries  
40 it's in, but it has been growing hugely.

41  
42 The idea of this e-learning program is that it helps  
43 prepare pastoral workers and Church leaders in different  
44 cultures and different continents. All continents are now  
45 involved in that program. The head of the unit is  
46 Father Hans Zollner, a Jesuit, who is also a member of the  
47 Pontifical Commission.

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One of the other things that we've been doing is setting up a diploma course. It's in its second year now, and there are now 20 students from I think four continents who are attending this two-semester diploma, with the aim of trying to develop the leaders for those countries who will be able to take forward education programs themselves.

This work, although it's not part of the Pontifical Commission, is in response to the Pontifical Commission. And there are a number of other kinds of initiatives like that which I think are developing in different parts of the world in response to the education work that the Pontifical Commission has been encouraging.

MS FURNESS: The Commission has also published guidelines?

BARONESS HOLLINS: That's right.

MS FURNESS: The purpose of - I'm sorry, Baroness?

BARONESS HOLLINS: Bill Kilgallon is the leader of that working group and is best placed to talk about the guidelines.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. In your document you prepared for the Royal Commission, you expressed some views in relation to the factors that may have contributed to the occurrence of child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions or affected the response of those institutions. Can you tell us what you consider in relation to those factors that may have contributed?

BARONESS HOLLINS: Which question are you referring to here?

MS FURNESS: It's on page 3 of your document, Baroness. Do you have that?

BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes. So which was the question? Could you repeat the question, I'm sorry?

MS FURNESS: Certainly. Do you see the question that's bolded at paragraph 2?

BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes.

1 MS FURNESS: And then you were asked in relation to  
2 a series of topics, the second one being the Church's  
3 structure and governance, including the role of the  
4 Vatican.  
5  
6 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes.  
7  
8 MS FURNESS: What are your views in relation to that in  
9 terms of contributing factors?  
10  
11 BARONESS HOLLINS: Well, I mean, I think --  
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13 MS FURNESS: Would it be easier to talk in terms of  
14 leadership?  
15  
16 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes, it probably would. I mean, the  
17 important thing about the Church is that I've understood  
18 a lot more about the Vatican and how the Holy See relates  
19 to bishops conferences and bishops around the world since  
20 I've been a member of the Pontifical Commission. I have  
21 actually described the Catholic Church as the largest  
22 ungoverned organisation in the world, and I don't mean that  
23 in an unkind way, but I think it is that the Pope's role is  
24 essentially one of kind of unity around the teaching of the  
25 Church in the theology and the doctrine of the Church, and  
26 I don't think the Pope really - he doesn't have any  
27 responsibility for what a bishop does in terms of things  
28 which relate to civil society.  
29  
30 He appoints bishops to take leadership and to provide  
31 the leadership in their own dioceses, and it's quite  
32 a difficult thing to kind of really get to grips with and  
33 to understand, but that sort of subsidiarity that the  
34 Church is based on does mean that - just like St Peter and  
35 the apostles, the apostles were expected to look to Rome,  
36 to look to St Peter, the same way the bishops are expected  
37 to, but it's very much around their pastoral  
38 responsibilities.  
39  
40 So when a bishop neglects to respond appropriately and  
41 to show the moral authority that is needed when child abuse  
42 is present, that's a really tricky thing, because it raises  
43 a lot of issues about where does responsibility lie for  
44 holding that bishop accountable?  
45  
46 One of the big issues we have talked about is the  
47 issue of bishop accountability, and it leads on, then, to

1 the motu proprio, As a Loving Mother, which the Pope issued  
2 last summer, which was about the absolute importance of  
3 trying to find a way to hold bishops accountable if they're  
4 not being held accountable in their own country.

5  
6 MS FURNESS: Can you hear me, Baroness? I think we're  
7 having difficulty hearing you. Could you perhaps speak for  
8 me?

9  
10 BARONESS HOLLINS: Can you hear me now?

11  
12 MS FURNESS: Yes, I can. Thank you very much. The  
13 tribunal that you referred to, that was established as  
14 a way of holding bishops accountable is no longer  
15 continuing; is that right?

16  
17 BARONESS HOLLINS: No, I didn't refer to the tribunal.  
18 I was referring to the panel of jurists which the Pope set  
19 up as a result of the motu proprio that he issued in June  
20 last year. Originally there was to be a tribunal.

21  
22 MS FURNESS: Yes.

23  
24 BARONESS HOLLINS: And the way that he works is, if he  
25 takes one of our recommendations, then he will delegate  
26 responsibility for implementing that recommendation that  
27 has been agreed to one of the congregations, one of the  
28 dicasteries. But I think further research suggested that  
29 it wasn't necessary. We don't know exactly what happened.  
30 But then he issued the motu proprio, As a Loving Mother,  
31 and he said with this letter his intention was to underline  
32 the among the aforesaid grave reasons - this is about the  
33 possibility of removal from ecclesiastical life - one of  
34 the grave reasons is "the negligence of bishops in the  
35 exercise of their office, in particular in relation to  
36 cases of sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults".

37  
38 We understand that that was to commence, to come into  
39 effect, from September 2016.

40  
41 MS FURNESS: Did it come into effect from that date?

42  
43 BARONESS HOLLINS: I believe it came into effect, but  
44 I don't yet know what the effect - I don't know. I think  
45 we have to wait and see what that leads to. What he said  
46 was that he can only be removed if he is objectively  
47 lacking, in a very grave matter, the diligence that his

1 pastoral office demands.

2

3 So the question about whether it has happened - as far  
4 as I know, I'm not aware of any bishop having been removed  
5 as yet under this edict.

6

7 MS FURNESS: Did you understand that the Pope had power  
8 under canon law to remove a bishop, in any event?

9

10 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes, the understanding that we had was  
11 that the Pope had the power to remove a bishop, but there  
12 was no process to do so, and that's why we understood that  
13 a process was needed. Because it can't be on the say-so of  
14 a media report or it can't be on the say-so of anything.  
15 In justice, there has to be a process. So there wasn't  
16 a process, and my understanding is that that's what the  
17 panel of jurists is to be about.

18

19 MS FURNESS: Thank you. You indicate in your document to  
20 us that local leadership at parish and school levels may  
21 need to be improved, with one gap being a relative lack of  
22 oversight of diocesan priests. Now, is that a lack of  
23 oversight by the bishop?

24

25 BARONESS HOLLINS: I think it probably varies hugely.  
26 I've talked to a number of people about this. Some have  
27 said to me that they feel that diocesan priests do have  
28 as good oversight as anybody else. Others have suggested  
29 that it may not be adequate. I mean, there are quite  
30 a number of ways in which priests are subject to, their  
31 work is subject to, scrutiny, but they are all very much -  
32 you know, there are different people who have  
33 responsibility for identifying and being aware of, and of  
34 course parishioners or anybody with concern would go to  
35 a bishop if they had a concern, but - yes.

36

37 MS FURNESS: You also refer to clericalism. This is over  
38 on page 4 under (e), Baroness. You refer to there being  
39 a risk that the power which is part of clericalism may be  
40 misused or simply serve to further isolate the priest. Do  
41 you see where I'm reading from?

42

43 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes, I do. I think that's right.  
44 I think that's been my experience, as a Catholic, kind of  
45 in my life, that some priests - not all but some priests -  
46 maybe through a feeling of insecurity or because they  
47 genuinely believe that they have an authority and

1 a position, that they do hold a great deal of power. It's  
2 not just priests, it's members of religious communities as  
3 well.

4  
5 I've talked to priests and monks about the issue of  
6 power and asked them whether they have any understanding of  
7 the amount of power that they hold by virtue of their  
8 office and by virtue of the work and the ministry they  
9 provide, and I think they are often very unaware of how  
10 powerful their positions are perceived by laypeople and,  
11 indeed, by religious sisters, for example, who often feel  
12 very lacking in power in comparison with an ordained  
13 priest.

14  
15 There is a problem with power, because abuse is always  
16 a consequence of a misuse of power. Power has to be used  
17 very wisely and very carefully. It's something that  
18 hierarchies need to guard against.

19  
20 MS FURNESS: Have you noticed any change in the priests  
21 and religious that you have been dealing with more recently  
22 as a move away from the clericalism approach?

23  
24 BARONESS HOLLINS: I have seen both a move away from  
25 clericalism, but I've also seen others in whom, perhaps in  
26 this time when priests may feel that they are under  
27 additional scrutiny, their clericalism seems undiminished  
28 and may indeed be a source of comfort for them.

29  
30 MS FURNESS: Does it ultimately come down to a question of  
31 education and leadership in respect of priests so that they  
32 understand, as you say, the context of power and its abuse  
33 and, as well, are led in the right direction in terms of  
34 how to properly use their position and serve their  
35 congregation?

36  
37 BARONESS HOLLINS: Do you know, I think to myself that  
38 it's really, really important that there is more lay  
39 leadership, because I think that without that lay kind of  
40 levelling of the situation, it's going to be very, very  
41 difficult for the ordained Church leaders to be able to  
42 change the culture of the current leadership. I think the  
43 places where I've seen most change have been in parishes,  
44 for example, and in dioceses, where the priests and the  
45 bishops have really welcomed, and not felt threatened by,  
46 lay leadership, and this obviously includes women. For  
47 many priests and bishops, they may feel more comfortable



1 having laymen advising them and supporting them. But  
2 I think until there is a sort of lay leadership which is  
3 able to stand alongside the ordained priests, then it's  
4 going to be very difficult for that perception of power and  
5 that potential misuse of power in any way to pass.

6  
7 We've seen this in the medical profession in the  
8 United Kingdom, and I'm sure you have in Australia as well,  
9 where doctors thought it was perfectly fine for them to  
10 govern themselves and not to be accountable to lay  
11 scrutiny. That has changed, but it has taken quite a while  
12 to change that attitude.

13  
14 MS FURNESS: In relation to the Church, is it a matter for  
15 the bishop to determine whether or not there's lay  
16 involvement and the extent to which they participate in  
17 governing the diocese?

18  
19 BARONESS HOLLINS: For the bishop, it would be entirely  
20 for the bishop to decide how much they wanted to involve  
21 laypeople in working with them and advising them in either  
22 a professional capacity or just a wise counsel type of  
23 capacity.

24  
25 But the same would be true at the parish level, where  
26 it would be down to an individual priest, unless there was  
27 real encouragement from a bishop. It would be very much  
28 down to an individual priest to decide how much he was  
29 going to manage his parish himself or how much he was going  
30 to seek guidance and support from the parishioners, the lay  
31 parishioners.

32  
33 MS FURNESS: With your knowledge of the structure of the  
34 Church, who or what body is in a position to provide  
35 leadership to bishops and priests so as to encourage them  
36 to move in the direction you're speaking of?

37  
38 BARONESS HOLLINS: Do you mean in the wider Church?  
39 I mean, of course people would look to - the Bishops  
40 Conference is a meeting of bishops, but it doesn't have  
41 authority over individual bishops, so it's a coming  
42 together. So they can debate these issues and discuss  
43 them, but it's down to the individual bishop to determine  
44 what happens in his diocese.

45  
46 We can look to the Pope to provide leadership, and he  
47 does. At the angelus every day and in his sermons every

1 day he's an extraordinary teacher and teaches about moral  
2 leadership. Nearly every day he's giving extraordinary  
3 teachings, which, if people read them and work to learn  
4 from them and live by them, then we would see change. But  
5 he's talking to the whole world.

6  
7 It is actually, the way the Church is structured, the  
8 individual bishop who is responsible for what happens in  
9 his own diocese.

10  
11 MS FURNESS: You refer to a lack of consistency in the  
12 application of ongoing professional supervision in relation  
13 to working priests and religious. Is that something that  
14 you've experienced in the work you've done?  
15

16 BARONESS HOLLINS: Probably only anecdotally, just that  
17 I understand that when CPD is offered, and if it's about  
18 human development, it will be poorly attended. It's not  
19 something which is sought. But that's only anecdotal.  
20 I've heard it a few times.  
21

22 MS FURNESS: As you'd know from your work as  
23 a psychiatrist, doctors are required to attend continuing  
24 education, as are lawyers and other professionals. It's  
25 not a requirement for priests and religious. Do you think  
26 it should be?  
27

28 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes. I do.  
29

30 MS FURNESS: How could that be imposed?  
31

32 BARONESS HOLLINS: In the medical world, it has taken  
33 quite a long time to impose it. Originally, it was our  
34 professional organisations which would recommend, and it's  
35 only since we've had revalidation in the medical world that  
36 we've been able to actually require that this takes place.  
37 Prior to that, it was advisory.  
38

39 Now, I'm not sure whether you've introduced  
40 revalidation for doctors in Australia yet. I talked about  
41 it some years ago when I visited the Australian Medical  
42 Association, and it's still quite new in the United  
43 Kingdom, but it's the first time we've had an appraisal  
44 system.  
45

46 I don't see why there couldn't be an appraisal system  
47 and why that appraisal system shouldn't require feedback

1 from parishioners and others with whom a priest or bishop  
2 is in regular contact. But then part of that appraisal  
3 would require that the priest or bishop would need to show  
4 that they were keeping up to date and were familiar with  
5 the issues which they were personally responsible for. So  
6 it would require quite a lot of structure to do, but  
7 I think it's of fundamental importance that the people keep  
8 up to date.

9  
10 MS FURNESS: Some bishops in Australia have the view that  
11 they have no power over their priest and cannot require him  
12 to undergo supervision, performance review or, indeed,  
13 mandatory education. What's your view?

14  
15 BARONESS HOLLINS: I know that some priests feel that that  
16 is the case and would resist. I think that's wrong.  
17 I think if they really are trying to point to some rule  
18 which says that's the case, then I would say that rule  
19 needs to change.

20  
21 MS FURNESS: Or perhaps the attitude towards that rule?

22  
23 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes. Can I just say that my experience  
24 in talking to priests in some countries has been that they  
25 would really welcome more interest in them and in their  
26 life, some priests. Now, I know in the United States  
27 there's research that, for example, Stephen Rossetti has  
28 done, where he found that priests were not lonely; that  
29 they were content with their lifestyle; the majority of  
30 priests were not struggling with their current lifestyle.

31  
32 That I don't believe to be the case in all countries,  
33 in all places, and I've certainly come across a number of  
34 priests who would really welcome more guidance and support  
35 from their bishops.

36  
37 MS FURNESS: There has been some talk in Australia about  
38 licensing priests in a similar way to which, perhaps,  
39 psychologists are licensed, so a condition of the licence  
40 might be continuing education, regular professional  
41 supervision and the like. Is that an issue that has come  
42 to your attention?

43  
44 BARONESS HOLLINS: I've certainly had discussions with  
45 senior people in the Church about this. I don't recall us  
46 discussing it in the Pontifical Commission. The answer is  
47 often that the sacramental part of a priest's role is not

1 something which could be subject to external lay scrutiny.

2

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10 BARONESS HOLLINS: And that that part of their role could  
11 be subject to licensing.

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But my view is that there is a professional part of a priest's role which is very similar to the kind of professional role that, for example, doctors and teachers might have.

MS FURNESS: And counsellors?

BARONESS HOLLINS: And that that part of their role could be subject to licensing.

MS FURNESS: So to separate out the sacramental role or the role that has theological underpinnings from that which is essentially of a counsellor or a psychologist or dealing pastorally with people and licence or otherwise regulate in some way that role; is that what you're saying?

BARONESS HOLLINS: I think that could be possible and I've certainly had discussions along those lines.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Baroness, I'll just go to Ms McCormack and come back to you with any additional comments you wish to make.

Would you tell the Royal Commission your full name?

MS McCORMACK: Kathleen Vera McCormack.

MS FURNESS: Ms McCormack, you were the director of welfare at CatholicCare for a very long time in Wollongong?

MS McCORMACK: In the Diocese of Wollongong, yes.

MS FURNESS: I think you began in about 1984?

MS McCORMACK: That's correct. I was appointed director.

MS FURNESS: And you were there for 30 years?

MS McCORMACK: In the end, yes, about 30 years.

MS FURNESS: You would have seen a deal of cultural change over that period?

MS McCORMACK: We started out in very humble beginnings, I was the only person employed, and we developed from

1           there.  
2  
3           MS FURNESS:    What was the organisation like when you left  
4           it a couple of years ago?  
5  
6           MS McCORMACK:   It was a multi-service organisation  
7           employing about 240 people with services to children, to  
8           families, to the school student and family program, to aged  
9           care and disabilities, and I think the budget was about  
10          \$18 million mostly coming from government.  
11  
12          MS FURNESS:    So it was mainly government funded?  
13  
14          MS McCORMACK:   Yes.  
15  
16          MS FURNESS:    And regulated because of that government  
17          funding as well as through other means?  
18  
19          MS McCORMACK:   Regulated, with auditing, et cetera.  
20  
21          MS FURNESS:    You were also a member of the Professional  
22          Standards Resource Group for the diocese?  
23  
24          MS McCORMACK:   For the Diocese of Wollongong, yes.  
25  
26          MS FURNESS:    That was for three years in the late 1990s?  
27  
28          MS McCORMACK:   That's correct.  That was in the time when  
29          Bishop Philip Wilson was there.  He was there from 1997 to  
30          2000.  
31  
32          MS FURNESS:    That was shortly after Towards Healing came  
33          into effect?  
34  
35          MS McCORMACK:   Yes, when Towards Healing came into effect,  
36          Bishop Philip set up that group and he was able to secure  
37          members from the community, two members who were not  
38          Catholic, and mostly laypeople, and I think one priest was  
39          on it.  
40  
41          MS FURNESS:    How did that group work in those days?  
42  
43          MS McCORMACK:   It worked extremely well because at the  
44          time we had a number of cases in Wollongong and we were  
45          dealing with and working with the victims and survivors,  
46          and really the support of the people from the community was  
47          very - it really helped the bishop to make good decisions

1 and really make sure that the victims and survivors were  
2 supported.

3  
4 MS FURNESS: Did you find that the presence of laypeople  
5 in that group and in the work that you were doing enhanced  
6 the ability of the diocese and the bishop to understand  
7 what was being experienced and to try to help people as  
8 best the diocese could?

9  
10 MS McCORMACK: It really helped because we had people  
11 there, we had psychologists who worked in the community, we  
12 had people who worked in the Department of Community  
13 Services, we had lawyers and also people who worked on the  
14 ground just in the local community, but they really came  
15 with a wealth of knowledge and also knew some of the causes  
16 of child sexual abuse, and they were able to help the  
17 bishop to make really sound decisions.

18  
19 What I was really impressed with at the time was that  
20 the bishop did listen and he learnt and was open to  
21 learning as to why this was happening and how he could deal  
22 with it.

23  
24 MS FURNESS: Thank you. You've been on the Pontifical  
25 Commission for how long?

26  
27 MS McCORMACK: Since 2015.

28  
29 MS FURNESS: How did that come about?

30  
31 MS McCORMACK: I think you'd have to ask Sheila Hollins  
32 that, but I was a new member appointed, and apparently what  
33 happened was that with the Commission, they were looking  
34 for people with different skills from all over the world,  
35 and they had very qualified people, like psychiatrists,  
36 canon lawyers; they have people who have worked with  
37 survivors and victims; and I think one of the things, when  
38 they looked to Australia, they were looking for someone not  
39 with the intellectual or the academic background but  
40 someone who had had on-the-ground experience. So I think  
41 that's how my name came up, because of the experience I had  
42 in Wollongong and especially in New South Wales.

43  
44 MS FURNESS: You're chair of the education working group?

45  
46 MS McCORMACK: I'm chair of that, yes.

47

1 MS FURNESS: What has that focused on?

2

3 MS McCORMACK: Mostly it's focusing on the education of  
4 families and children to really alert them to the culture  
5 of sexual abuse and really about a culture of safety. But  
6 what's really hard about that group is that we're dealing  
7 with the whole world. We can look at and we can learn from  
8 what has happened in Australia, the United States, the UK  
9 and Ireland, but in some countries we're dealing with - and  
10 two of the sisters on the Commission, Sister Kayula and  
11 Sister Hermenegild - are from Africa, and in Africa child  
12 abuse is not even a crime, and they're working all the time  
13 protecting children, trying to educate them.

14

15 So we have to take into account, while we can learn  
16 from what has happened in the countries around us, that,  
17 okay, when we're helping to teach those countries, we have  
18 to really take into account their culture and not further  
19 upset them.

20

21 But what we're doing in Rome before the plenary in  
22 March, we're having a day at the Gregorian University. To  
23 start, we've invited three countries - Colombia, Argentina  
24 and Mexico - to come and share with us what they're doing,  
25 and we can try to learn from them and look at the gaps.  
26 We're also having Mr Francis Sullivan from the Truth,  
27 Justice and Healing Council to come over and talk about the  
28 experience in Australia, so that we can start to look at  
29 these different areas and see, then, with the Gregorian  
30 University, under the guidance of Hans Zollner, to start  
31 research as to how we can start working with different  
32 cultures in the world. But we're in our infancy. This is  
33 just a start. It's years and years of hard work that we  
34 have to look at.

35

36 MS FURNESS: You say that the Pontifical Commission is  
37 experiencing difficulties in reaching the performance stage  
38 of its development as a result of infrequent meetings,  
39 limited resources and structural and cultural barriers both  
40 in the Church and across nations?

41

42 MS McCORMACK: That's true. When I say that, the people  
43 on the Commission, the people working on it, come from all  
44 over the world and they are so committed to the task. They  
45 really give wholeheartedly. They're volunteers. And when  
46 they come to Rome for the plenary, the work goes on there,  
47 but when they get back to their countries, the work

1 continues all the time.

2  
3 I mean, people like myself, Sheila and Bill, our work  
4 groups, we Skype sometimes twice a month. It's ongoing.  
5 But the thing is, we're in the Vatican, we're advisory to  
6 the Holy Father. Our budget would be what you would do in  
7 a diocese, but we're dealing with the whole world.

8  
9 I just look at what has happened here at the Royal  
10 Commission in Australia and the money that has had to be  
11 spent to look at what went wrong. If we could mobilise the  
12 Catholic Church and the world to help us with the  
13 Pontifical Commission to be in a position of prevention  
14 rather than cure - so we're looking to the Royal  
15 Commission, we're following everything, all the research  
16 and such. But I think part of our role - this is just my  
17 thinking; I'm not speaking on behalf of the Commission now.  
18 My thinking is if we can really reach out to the world to  
19 help us so that we can be in a very good position about  
20 prevention in the future, especially with the countries in  
21 the third world we're moving into.

22  
23 MS FURNESS: Thank you. You quote a letter that the  
24 Baroness recently wrote in relation to criticism in  
25 overseas media that the Vatican was moving too slowly in  
26 this area. Baroness, I'm not sure that you have a copy of  
27 that with you. Do you have a copy of Ms McCormack's notes?

28  
29 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes, I do.

30  
31 MS FURNESS: You will see on page 2 she sets out a letter  
32 that you wrote and says that she agrees with that.

33  
34 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes.

35  
36 MS FURNESS: What were the circumstances of writing the  
37 letter?

38  
39 BARONESS HOLLINS: The Guardian newspaper had published an  
40 article about the review of a book written by somebody  
41 who'd previously worked in the Vatican called Fittipaldi,  
42 and it made some criticisms of the Pontifical Commission,  
43 saying that it had only met twice and saying that  
44 Pope Francis wasn't serious about addressing child abuse.  
45 And I disagree with that. I think he's very serious about  
46 trying to address it. So I simply wrote to the Guardian  
47 saying that, actually, I was a member of the Pontifical



1 Commission and that I personally had attended I think eight  
2 plenary meetings but also that the majority of our work  
3 took place in working groups.  
4

5 This was responded to by other people, and so I wrote  
6 again in rather more detail, because the criticism  
7 suggested that I wasn't acknowledging the seriousness of  
8 the situation. So I wrote a second letter, the same week,  
9 which was also published, and this is the letter.

10  
11 MS FURNESS: You refer in this letter to the fact that for  
12 many years bishops have been advised to cooperate fully  
13 with civil authorities, but that some still fail to do so  
14 and it's a matter of huge concern. Is that failure  
15 a current failure, according to the information available  
16 to you?  
17

18 BARONESS HOLLINS: Well, it is very difficult, because we  
19 don't deal with individual cases. We don't receive cases.  
20 We will only know about cases that are reported on in the  
21 media, for example, or through more informal sources.  
22 Because that's not our role, to deal with individual cases.  
23

24 But the fact that complaints are still made about  
25 a failure of bishop accountability - I suspect that there  
26 will be countries in the world where this issue has still  
27 not actually really reached their consciousness as being  
28 relevant to them.  
29

30 I'll just give you one example briefly. It was when  
31 we had the conference in 2012 at the Gregorian University  
32 where, after Marie Collins spoke very, very powerfully  
33 about her own experience, one African bishop stood up and  
34 said, "Thank you so much, because I wondered why I had come  
35 to this conference. I thought this was a western issue.  
36 I didn't realise it applied in my country. You've opened  
37 my eyes. I now realise that it is an issue in my country  
38 and I was unaware of it."  
39

40 I think that insight and realisation and awareness is  
41 something which the Commission is working hard through its  
42 educational endeavours to change, so that there is a wider  
43 awareness. It's some of the work that Kath McCormack was  
44 speaking about, the importance of raising awareness so that  
45 people actually recognise the signs that abuse may be  
46 happening or that there may be risk of it.  
47

1           So the question about whether there are bishops who  
2 are not cooperating fully we suspect is true, but of course  
3 what we also know is that there are some countries where it  
4 may be very difficult to cooperate with civil authorities,  
5 because civil authorities may not see this as a crime but  
6 may see the allegation and the reporter of the crime as the  
7 problem and punish the reporter of the crime.

8  
9           THE CHAIR:   Baroness, Ms McCormack identified what  
10 I understand to be a need for more resources for the  
11 Commission to effectively carry out its work. I hope  
12 I have it right. She nods. Do you share that view?  
13

14           BARONESS HOLLINS:   I do. I do share that view.  
15

16           THE CHAIR:   Then can I ask you why can't the Pope help  
17 you?  
18

19           BARONESS HOLLINS:   Well, we are - we've been - setting up  
20 this Commission has been quite a complex thing because, as  
21 Kath McCormack spoke about and I spoke about, we are trying  
22 to find ways of raising awareness and introducing  
23 guidelines, which I'm sure Bill Kilgallon will talk about,  
24 which will be relevant and meaningful and effective in all  
25 countries in the world where the Church is operating.  
26

27           So why can't the Pope help us? Well, to some extent,  
28 we have to understand what the resources are that we need,  
29 and the resources are, in my view, about the administrative  
30 competencies to be able to run a very effective  
31 organisation. I think that perhaps the Vatican itself -  
32 how can I put this? - maybe hasn't understood the  
33 possibilities.  
34

35           When we see the organisation and the competencies  
36 involved in the Australian Royal Commission, we don't have  
37 that level of support. We have some individual, very well  
38 qualified members, but in terms of the support that backs  
39 it up, they are very good, very committed staff, but they  
40 don't have that breadth of experience that I think  
41 a larger, more professionally organised body would be able  
42 to provide.  
43

44           THE CHAIR:   Well, again, the same question. Why can't you  
45 go to the Pope and say, "We don't have the resources we  
46 need to effectively carry out our work"?  
47

1 BARONESS HOLLINS: I think that may well be something that  
2 we will be wanting to feed back to him when we complete our  
3 review that we're undergoing at the moment. We're looking  
4 at the future of the Commission at our next meeting.

5

6 MS FURNESS: Back to you, Ms McCormack. In the notes that  
7 you provided for the Royal Commission, you set out some  
8 challenges that you think exist in Australia in terms of  
9 child safety, complaint handling and risk management.

10

11 MS McCORMACK: With complaint handling, I really believe  
12 that it's ongoing education all the time and that we can  
13 never have enough education about it. Also within the  
14 Church I think we've really done our best in some areas to  
15 get it across.

16

17 One of the things that I'm really impressed with is  
18 what is being set up with Catholic Professional Standards  
19 Limited, which will be overseeing the work of the Catholic  
20 Church. But to do that - you can have all the audits in  
21 the world, like in my experience with aged care, disability  
22 and childcare, where we had to meet the requirements,  
23 et cetera, of the Children's Guardian, of Ageing and  
24 Disability Services, et cetera; you can tick the boxes all  
25 the time, and the five years comes up and you do the audit  
26 again. But if you don't start to have an alert culture and  
27 it become part of the staff and the people working with  
28 children, you're missing the point.

29

30 So I think it's education, education, education, and  
31 that people start to pick up the behaviours of people, to  
32 look at the safe environments, to look at people who are  
33 not following the guidelines of the organisation, to look  
34 at people who work in isolation, so that all the staff  
35 start to understand the indicators. I think that's what  
36 has to happen. It has to be an alert culture and that  
37 people are working at it all the time.

38

39 MS FURNESS: You refer to the pastoral approach to  
40 management often taken within the Church being  
41 a soft-handed approach?

42

43 MS McCORMACK: Just in my experience in working in the  
44 Church, I think that's where the bishops come unstuck,  
45 because, as a bishop, they're a pastor to their priest and  
46 they take the pastoral approach. It's all about  
47 forgiveness, and at times they don't realise that the

1 person they're taking the pastoral approach to is really  
2 managing them very well. They're not dealing with the  
3 issue. The recipient is just continuing that behaviour.  
4

5 So I really think that some of the things that  
6 Baroness Hollins spoke about with professional guidance and  
7 also with priests being accountable are really important,  
8 because I really believe it's very hard for bishops.  
9

10 One of my experiences is that with working with the  
11 bishops, I've been able to enable them to take some  
12 responsibility for what has happened and they've really  
13 learnt about sexual abuse of children, et cetera, but it  
14 has been the clergy who have not come with them. And even  
15 to this day, there would still be some priests who would  
16 not agree with what the bishop is trying to do for the care  
17 and protection in their diocese.  
18

19 MS FURNESS: And is the structure thus that those priests  
20 can do what they wish to do, notwithstanding it's contrary  
21 to the bishop's wishes?  
22

23 MS McCORMACK: Could you repeat?  
24

25 MS FURNESS: The structure within the diocese with the  
26 bishop's role in relation to the priest?  
27

28 MS McCORMACK: It is the structure in the diocese, but  
29 hopefully with what's coming out of the Royal Commission  
30 and what the bishops are looking to do together at the  
31 Bishops Conference, they will all start to learn what their  
32 real role is and be able to work together on that for the  
33 future.  
34

35 MS FURNESS: You'll have heard Baroness Hollins' answers  
36 to questions about professional supervision, mandatory  
37 continuing training and some sort of performance review as  
38 being part and parcel of a priest's life. What do you have  
39 to say about that?  
40

41 MS McCORMACK: Look, I agree with that. A number of my  
42 colleagues and friends are priests, and they do operate  
43 like that. They're very responsible people. They're  
44 professional people. They have ongoing training. They  
45 have supervision. They try to help others to do it as  
46 well. So it is possible, but I just think that leadership  
47 has to make sure that it happens and instill in them.

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MS FURNESS: By leadership, you mean the bishops?

MS McCORMACK: I mean the bishops, yes. And the bishops themselves - some bishops take courses and they have their professional retreats. I know that in each diocese, they do have in-service days, and apparently priests are supposed to attend those in-service days, but some don't, and especially around child protection I think it's very serious. Because in the workplace, in places like Catholic Education and CatholicCare and any other organisation in the diocese, if people haven't done their child protection training and have ongoing training in that, that's part of them not being further employed. Well, I think that should be for the priest as well if the priest is a parish priest.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. You speak in your notes about Catholic Professional Standards Limited, the company you've referred to earlier, and you say there that it is to be hoped that dioceses will report on abuse cases and their strategies, et cetera. When you say "it is to be hoped", do you have some doubt that that will occur?

MS McCORMACK: Look, I've been very encouraged by listening to the hearing here over the last couple of weeks and hearing the religious leaders and the bishops saying that they're going to go along with this, that they agree with it. But I think it is about the leadership making sure that all their people who are in their communities or dioceses come along with it.

The whole thing is that in New South Wales we have very good guidelines that we follow. We're fortunate. It would be good if that were Australia-wide, because then you have an external body that's really monitoring what's happening.

MS FURNESS: What you seem to be saying is that it effectively depends upon the qualities of the bishop as to what the culture will be within that diocese?

MS McCORMACK: I think that's right.

MS FURNESS: And the same with the parish priests, their personal qualities will determine what happens in their parish?

1 MS McCORMACK: Yes.

2

3 MS FURNESS: And whether or not they involve laity in the  
4 work they do?

5

6 MS McCORMACK: One of the things - my experience has been  
7 that laity have been very involved, and, as I said, I've  
8 been very fortunate in the diocese that I've worked in  
9 because I had bishops that did listen and I was able to  
10 work with them and able to lead them to put appropriate  
11 processes in place.

12

13 Also, before I left the diocese, it was women who were  
14 doing all the work around child protection. That was  
15 a real breakthrough, and that is continuing and I know  
16 that. So I do think a lot of bishops are very open to  
17 that.

18

19 MS FURNESS: You speak about training as being very  
20 important and education as being very important and you  
21 provide some statistics from 2015 in relation to the  
22 United States. This is on page 6 of your notes. You say  
23 that from its 2015 audit, the Catholic Church in the  
24 United States has already trained 98 per cent of its  
25 volunteers, employees, educators, clergy and candidates in  
26 parishes how to create safe environments and prevent sexual  
27 abuse, and prepared more than 4.3 million children to  
28 recognise abuse and protect themselves. I take it that's  
29 the sort of work that you would be encouraging take place  
30 in Australia?

31

32 MS McCORMACK: Most definitely, yes, and I think that's  
33 the sort of work with the Pontifical Commission we would be  
34 looking and hoping to do, to get other countries to do  
35 that.

36

37 One of the other things is that in Australia - and  
38 I can only speak about the diocese that I've worked in -  
39 there have been a lot of good processes put in place,  
40 although a lot of things haven't been done appropriately,  
41 but I think we need to start talking about how we do  
42 educate - what are the requirements for people to work in  
43 a diocese, whether they're a teacher, social worker,  
44 psychologist or a priest, and then to make sure that,  
45 within that diocese, we then tell people what is going on,  
46 how many cases there have been, how we've dealt with it,  
47 what education programs have gone on, so that people then -

1 we can start to alert people who live in the community that  
2 we are trying to be an alert culture for children.  
3  
4 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Can I turn to your colleague.  
5 Would you tell the Royal Commission your full name?  
6  
7 MR KILGALLON: Yes, it's William Francis Kilgallon, but  
8 Bill generally.  
9  
10 MS FURNESS: Thank you, Mr Kilgallon. And your current  
11 position?  
12  
13 MR KILGALLON: I currently work for the Catholic Church in  
14 New Zealand as Director of the National Office for  
15 Professional Standards.  
16  
17 MS FURNESS: And you've been a member of the Pontifical  
18 Commission since December 2015?  
19  
20 MR KILGALLON: Yes. I joined at the same time as  
21 Kath McCormack.  
22  
23 MS FURNESS: How did your appointment come about?  
24  
25 MR KILGALLON: I was consulted about the membership of the  
26 Commission and recommended somebody that I thought would be  
27 very suitable to be a member of the Commission and had  
28 a reply inviting me to join the Commission.  
29  
30 MS FURNESS: Was it your background in professional  
31 standards, do you think, that caused you to be invited?  
32  
33 MR KILGALLON: No. I think it was - that's something  
34 much sort of later in my life. It's a mixture of my  
35 experience. I started my working life as a Catholic priest  
36 in a city called Leeds in the north of England, as you'd  
37 guess by the accent, and spent most of my working life  
38 there.  
39  
40 I went there in 1970, and in 1971 I set up an  
41 organisation to work with homeless people, because there  
42 were lots of them in the city centre, and set up an  
43 independent organisation to work with them and then trained  
44 in social work and then went back to work there and then  
45 left the priesthood and carried on in that work and  
46 developed that organisation.  
47

1 Now, people who end up homeless on the streets are  
2 there for a variety of reasons. Many of them had serious  
3 issues with alcohol misuse, serious mental health problems,  
4 so over the years we developed services for drinkers, we  
5 developed services for street drug users, and a series of  
6 services for people with mental health problems and  
7 learning disabilities. So I ran that organisation for  
8 I think 24 years.  
9

10 From starting in a basement building behind the  
11 cathedral, by the time I left it, we were working across  
12 the north-east of England, had about 850 staff and provided  
13 a wide range of services.  
14

15 At the same time, I'd got involved in the politics of  
16 the city and so was on the city council and on various  
17 health service management boards.  
18

19 In the early 1980s the issue of sexual abuse in  
20 families started to become really apparent, and one of the  
21 paediatricians in the city and a police officer did some  
22 really pioneering work in recognising it and taking action.  
23 They faced very, very severe criticism. People did not  
24 want to hear their message in the city.  
25

26 I was at that time responsible for social services on  
27 the city council, and so it fell to me to get involved very  
28 closely with them and, if you like, stand alongside them in  
29 that work.  
30

31 I got involved, then, over the years in a number of  
32 advisory bodies to government on mental health issues and  
33 on learning disabilities and on the training of social  
34 workers, so at national level, and eventually then went to  
35 work heading up an organisation the government had set up  
36 called the Social Care Institute for Excellence, which  
37 looked at trying to identify what works in social work and  
38 social care and then set guidance for policy and practice,  
39 to set the standards so that the inspectorates could go in  
40 and look at those services and measure them against best  
41 practice. So I did that for some years in London.  
42

43 I'd earlier in my career, as well, been involved in  
44 a couple of inquiries, one into very serious failures in  
45 a local authority children's service in the north-east of  
46 England where, in residential care, there had been  
47 systematic and continued sexual abuse of children, and



1 I was appointed to lead that inquiry, and, again, an  
2 inquiry into a hospital for people with learning  
3 disabilities where there had been significant abuse and  
4 really major failures in the management of that hospital  
5 that was part of the National Health Service.  
6

7 MS FURNESS: Can I bring you to the Pontifical Commission.  
8 Is your work there primarily in relation to the guidelines?  
9

10 MR KILGALLON: That has been the focus up till now -  
11 mainly developing those guidelines. The guidelines are  
12 important because you have to have a starting point. The  
13 guidelines, if they're not followed --  
14

15 MS FURNESS: Can I stop you for a minute so you can  
16 explain what the guidelines are about?  
17

18 MR KILGALLON: Yes. We start off with - these guidelines  
19 are a template for the Church around the world. Each  
20 conference of bishops is required to have a set of  
21 guidelines about how they will prevent and respond to  
22 sexual abuse.  
23

24 So we've given them a template to draw up their  
25 guidelines on. It starts from the foundations are the  
26 gospel; that this isn't some kind of optional extra that  
27 children and vulnerable adults should be safe, this is  
28 absolutely central to the mission of the Church. The  
29 second foundation is the United Nations declaration on the  
30 rights of the child, because right through, wherever the  
31 abuse takes place, whether it's in the Church, in  
32 government establishments, or wherever, those children are  
33 being abused, their rights are being ignored, and that's  
34 a fundamental issue for us, that children have rights. So  
35 that's where we begin.  
36

37 The next stage is that within a country or set of  
38 countries that are grouped together, there should be one  
39 set of guidelines that every diocese and every religious  
40 order signs up to. We don't want a situation where you  
41 have a country where everybody agrees it except one rogue  
42 bishop doing his own thing, or one rogue order saying, "We  
43 don't want to sign up to that." It needs to be a coherent  
44 set of guidelines for the whole country.  
45

46 Then it goes through a fairly logical process of  
47 saying we need to have safe recruitment, we need to have

1 good training of the people we recruit, we need to develop  
2 a safe Church environment, and that includes having  
3 education and awareness raising. We then need to see what  
4 happens when abuse does happen, that there are good  
5 structures for responding to abuse. Then the next section  
6 is about how we work with survivors and victims, and then  
7 finally about offenders. The last section says when you've  
8 got all this in place, you need a monitoring system,  
9 a system of audit and monitoring that has some independence  
10 and that can look at each diocese and order and see if they  
11 are carrying out what is in the guidelines. So that's the  
12 structure that we are recommending to every country.

13  
14 MS FURNESS: When you say you're recommending, is it the  
15 Commission that's recommending it or is it Pope Francis  
16 that's recommending it?

17  
18 MR KILGALLON: At this stage it's the Commission that's  
19 recommending it. We've published it on our website, as  
20 you've seen, because you've read that. I think it's a very  
21 useful template.

22  
23 Now, we're working across the world and we're working  
24 with some countries where they don't have much in the way  
25 of a developed system of safeguarding for children and  
26 vulnerable adults, and so we've had initial talks with some  
27 of the Catholic development agencies, and they're willing  
28 to help in those countries to promote the structures and  
29 develop and train people to undertake this sort of work.

30  
31 MS FURNESS: Do you have any system in place for  
32 determining whether, and if so who, has taken up or not  
33 taken up the guidelines?

34  
35 MR KILGALLON: One of the proposals that we're looking at  
36 next month is having an assessment, having somebody review  
37 all the guidelines that are currently in existence, so  
38 there will be 120 Bishops Conferences, roughly, it might  
39 be - 120 at the most, I think - reviewing all those,  
40 analysing them, and seeing how they compare with the  
41 template and then working to see how we can assist those  
42 countries to develop it, particularly those that are way  
43 off the mark. That will need a significant research  
44 capability.

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46 MS FURNESS: I take it that in terms of your dealings with  
47 these 120-odd, did you say Bishops Conferences --

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MR KILGALLON: Yes.

MS FURNESS: -- that your role is one of influence and persuasion with the imprimatur of the Pope behind you, having established the Commission?

MR KILGALLON: That's right. Now, whether influence will change and how long that influence will take is a matter of debate, but that's the approach that's being taken.

The same system works within our work across the Vatican as well, that because our remit is broad, we don't fit with any departments in the Vatican, but our work touches many of them. So, for example, the congregation that's responsible for training clergy has, in its last directive about training clergy, said that there must be, in seminary training, specific modules on safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. So that has to be introduced into all seminaries. The reference for that is work that's being done by the Pontifical Commission.

So our work touches many of the departments, and that's a challenge, too. I mean, anybody who has worked with government, whether it's in Church or in the state, knows how jealously government departments guard their own domain and there can be some push-back about taking advice from others.

MS FURNESS: The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has quite a significant role in relation to priests who are accused, where the bishop accepts some semblance of the truth about their conduct. Perhaps I might ask this of you, Baroness, there has been evidence that, in Australia, the CDF is very slow in responding to matters that are brought to its attention by Australian bishops. Now, I understand that there is no functional relationship between you and the CDF. However, Cardinal O'Malley, I think, has recently been appointed to the CDF. Is that right?

BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes, that's right.

MS FURNESS: What have been, if any, your dealings or interactions with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith?

1 BARONESS HOLLINS: One of the first appointed members of  
2 the Pontifical Commission was a professor of canon law,  
3 a lay professor of canon law, who was employed as a staff  
4 member within the Congregation for the Doctrine of the  
5 Faith. He resigned from the Commission last year because  
6 he felt he couldn't give the time that he needed, and  
7 I don't know the full reasons, but we were told that he had  
8 decided he couldn't make the contribution that was needed.

9  
10 But it was useful having him. It was also very  
11 difficult for him because he only spoke Italian, and the  
12 working language of the Commission is English. Most people  
13 have at least some English. But it does make communication  
14 very difficult, even with good interpreters.

15  
16 The other thing that has happened is that at our last  
17 meeting, a staff member from the CDF came for the meeting,  
18 and Bill Kilgallon could say more about that, because one  
19 of the reasons he came was specifically to work with the  
20 guidelines working group.

21  
22 MR KILGALLON: Yes. We have identified in every  
23 department a link person with the Commission. The link  
24 person identified by the CDF was an American canon lawyer  
25 working in the CDF, and he was very helpful, in the last  
26 meeting we had, in talking to us about the guidelines.

27  
28 Sadly, he has returned to the USA because appointments  
29 to the Vatican are for a fixed period usually of five or  
30 seven years. People go from different countries. So we'll  
31 hopefully get as good a link person again. But there are  
32 challenges there, as I say, about relating to departments.

33  
34 MS FURNESS: There has equally been evidence that the  
35 process with the CDF works reasonably well, so there is  
36 differing evidence before the Royal Commission about that.  
37 Have either of you had any dealings with the CDF or others  
38 who have had dealings with the CDF to be able to comment on  
39 that?

40  
41 MR KILGALLON: Yes, I've had dealings there. The process  
42 I've found to be slow and I think there are systems that  
43 could be improved considerably. It could be dealt with  
44 regionally instead of everything being sent to Rome.

45  
46 The risk of that is that regions would not do it well,  
47 but the CDF could have the auditing role rather than the

1 doing role, and that would, I think, be more effective. So  
2 you could have a region - Australia, New Zealand, Pacific  
3 Islands, PNG and the Solomon Islands - as a group, for  
4 example, and do it regionally and have some expertise  
5 attached to that.

6

7 MS FURNESS: Is there any role that the Commission has in  
8 relation to raising an issue like that?

9

10 MR KILGALLON: Yes. One of our working groups looks at  
11 particular issues about canon law. We're meeting this  
12 time - they've looked at a number of issues in canon law,  
13 and, for example, one of the issues I've asked them to look  
14 at is, within canon law, there is the equivalent of  
15 a statute of limitations for dealing with sexual abuse  
16 cases of 20 years, which can be dispensed with on  
17 a case-by-case basis and usually is.

18

19 I'm recommending that they request a change to  
20 canon law so that there is no statute of limitations  
21 because the statute of limitations, in my experience, is  
22 a great disservice to those who have been abused. It does  
23 nothing for them. It only serves to protect the  
24 organisation and sometimes the abuser.

25

26 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Now, I think we might be having  
27 some difficulties with the video connection. Can you hear  
28 me, Baroness?

29

30 BARONESS HOLLINS: I can hear you, yes. I can't see you  
31 any more. It says that somebody has left the meeting. The  
32 lights went off in the room, and I think the security  
33 officer came to turn them back on again, but just when he  
34 did that, the video connection disappeared. I could go and  
35 just call him and ask him to come back, but I can hear you.

36

37 MS FURNESS: Why don't we just continue without seeing you  
38 but hearing you.

39

40 THE CHAIR: We can't see you, either, Baroness.

41

42 BARONESS HOLLINS: Okay.

43

44 MS FURNESS: Baroness, is there anything you wish to add,  
45 having heard the evidence of the other two members?

46

47 BARONESS HOLLINS: I agree with what they've said. One

1 thing I'd like to say is that I think we are all speaking  
2 as individuals. We're not actually representing the  
3 Pontifical Commission. That's quite important because - so  
4 that's one thing.

5  
6 Is there something else that I would like to say? No,  
7 I don't think so.

8  
9 THE CHAIR: Baroness, that comment intrigues me. Would  
10 the Commission say different things?

11  
12 BARONESS HOLLINS: I think the individual members will  
13 have different perspectives. I don't think they would  
14 say - I don't think all of the Commission members would  
15 necessarily agree with everything that I've said, because  
16 people will have their individual perspectives. And,  
17 remember, people come from all over the world, so their own  
18 experience will be different.

19  
20 MR KILGALLON: Yes. We're not, as a group, developing any  
21 party line. If we did, I think some of us would choose not  
22 to be there. The invitation was quite clear that we were  
23 there as individuals because of the experience we've had.  
24 Certainly I would personally resist any attempt to say  
25 that, "This is a line you will follow", because I don't see  
26 that as our purpose.

27  
28 THE CHAIR: It leads to a further question. The picture  
29 you all paint, from an outsider's point of view, is of  
30 a world organisation which is struggling to come to terms  
31 with the safety of children and its responsibilities in  
32 that area. Is that right?

33  
34 MR KILGALLON: I would agree with that, yes, yes.

35  
36 THE CHAIR: Baroness, do you share that view?

37  
38 BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes, I do. I think as the total  
39 leadership, that is true. I think the Pope does understand  
40 the seriousness of it and I think there are many other  
41 leaders who do, but I think that the organisation, with the  
42 leadership that it has - there are some people struggling  
43 to come to terms with it.

44  
45 THE CHAIR: Insofar as you each make your contribution as  
46 you do, do you have confidence that you have the capacity,  
47 resources and, if you like, the power to actually influence

1 change?

2

3 MR KILGALLON: I would say that although we've not been  
4 refused anything, we haven't had any request for funding  
5 denied at all, I think the way that the Commission has been  
6 structured in terms of the support staff is inadequate.  
7 I think those inadequacies will be discussed at our next  
8 meeting because we have a session about that, and I think  
9 we all have views on how that could be improved.

10

11 It's early days in those terms, and I think we have to  
12 learn from experience elsewhere. I have to say that  
13 looking at this Commission, I have followed this Commission  
14 very closely. Although we're only over the ditch there,  
15 New Zealand doesn't always see Australia as a model in  
16 anything --

17

18 THE CHAIR: I'm surprised.

19

20 MR KILGALLON: But we've been following this, I've been  
21 following this, and one of the things that has really  
22 impressed me is the approach you've taken to research. It  
23 seems to me that you've had a very systematic, well thought  
24 out program, and you've commissioned research widely into  
25 some really important topics. I have to say I was pleased  
26 to see my former organisation undertaking one of the  
27 research proposals. That's of value not just in Australia  
28 but throughout the world, because many of the issues you've  
29 looked at apply elsewhere and there's a huge amount of  
30 learning that you've brought there.

31

32 We as a Commission can follow that example. Take an  
33 issue that was debated yesterday with the religious orders  
34 about whether people should be kept within communities or  
35 not. As far as I can see, there's no evidence base for  
36 taking a decision on that. There has been no research that  
37 I'm aware of as to whether sending people - detaching them  
38 from the community or keeping them in community, whether  
39 one works better than the other. That's an area of  
40 research that we're talking about whether we should  
41 commission from the Pontifical Commission, specifically  
42 looking at that, because that seems to me to be a crucial  
43 issue.

44

45 THE CHAIR: You realise that the significance of the work  
46 that you're doing in relation to the whole Church is of  
47 fundamental importance to individual countries?

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MR KILGALLON: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Because insofar as this Commission has identified, recognised and discussed problems with culture, practices and the way the Church conducts itself in Australia, real change will only occur, as we understand the process, if it's coming from Rome ultimately.

MR KILGALLON: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I assume you all share that perspective?

MS McCORMACK: I'd just like to, if I could, answer the question about the Commission, and Bill answered you. I would just like to say that when I first started out in this work in the late 1980s and the 1990s, there was such resistance. I worked in such isolation, because no-one believed what was happening, and we had no guidelines, we had no processes, no map, and we just had to work our way through it.

Through doing that, we were able to draw the state into it and child protection - everything. We were able to do it. And that's how I experience Rome. The only way that I can stand it is that I have to have hope, and it's like water on a rock. We've just got to keep at it. The few things that we have achieved - and I think one of the greatest things is, with the formation of bishops, that now Cardinal O'Malley and members of the Commission are there speaking to the bishops and educating them about child protection, and that's happening already.

So if we can start there in Rome, maybe that can have a ripple effect through the world. So we know how serious it is, but it's the responsibility we have and, as I said, it's hope.

THE CHAIR: Baroness, do you want to say anything on that subject?

BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes. When we first started out, there were big issues about what kind of organisation would we be? Would we be entirely independent? Who would fund us? What would our relationship be with other organisations within the Vatican? Whereas on one hand some members were very keen that we should be entirely independent, in the



1 end it was decided that we would become what's called an  
2 autonomous institution within the Vatican.

3  
4 We're actually not like any other organisation within  
5 the Vatican. We were very clear that we didn't want to be  
6 part of a dicastery or part of a congregation, because we  
7 wanted to be separate. However, there are real  
8 difficulties in doing that. Part of what we've been doing  
9 over the three years - and it may seem that it has taken us  
10 a long time to get to where we've got - is that we've been  
11 having to establish relationships and try to understand how  
12 things are done within what is essentially an Italian kind  
13 of organisation.

14  
15 I think we believe very strongly that the Church  
16 should be paying for this work, that we shouldn't be  
17 raising money from outside or from philanthropy, that we  
18 should be looking to the Church to fund it, but trying to  
19 work out what we need to have in place in order to be able  
20 to have the influence that we need is quite difficult - and  
21 I think the way that Kath McCormack has just put it, about  
22 trying to find the map which will enable us to know where  
23 we should be putting our efforts.

24  
25 And I would just say one more thing, which is that  
26 rather than actually doing research ourselves, I do think  
27 that we're beginning to understand the need to engage other  
28 people to do some of that work and we're going to have to  
29 work through partners. There's no way a small  
30 organisation, or even a big organisation, in Rome could  
31 ever do what needs to be done across the world. So it is  
32 going to be through educating leaders, educating Church  
33 leaders, and through commissioning or encouraging research  
34 to take place in other places.

35  
36 For example, the Centre for Child Protection now has  
37 six PhD students coming from different countries, who are  
38 doing research on formation, around issues which have been  
39 raised by the working group on formation in the Pontifical  
40 Commission. It's those kinds of partnerships and the  
41 partnerships that Bill Kilgallon spoke about with the  
42 Catholic development agencies where we need other people to  
43 be supporting our work and really developing it. But that  
44 sort of central organisation, I would say, is still a work  
45 in progress. We haven't got it right yet.

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47 THE CHAIR: Ms Needham, do you have any questions?

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COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Excuse me, I have a couple of things. Thank you.

Ms McCormack, you mentioned an alert culture when you talked about auditing and ticking the box and that sort of thing. As well as an alert culture, though, would you not agree that there needs, as well, to be a supportive culture so that if someone does see a boundary violation or something that concerns them, they can go to the appropriate management level and be fully supported in raising that issue and not be the subject of any criticism or punishment?

MS McCORMACK: That's what I mean by an alert culture, that everybody is on the same bus, that people all take responsibility; it's not just management. If a colleague sees a colleague not following the guidelines or working individually with children, that they would have the confidence to go forward - that's what I'm talking about.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Would you see the responsibility for inculcating that sort of culture in any organisation as starting at the top?

MS McCORMACK: Of course, yes, but I think with the top being open to the suggestions of the people in the workplace as well.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Yes, and in the Catholic dioceses, that would be the bishop?

MS McCORMACK: Yes, and in the Catholic dioceses, the bishops do have professional standards groups and hopefully there are a lot of people there who are qualified in education, welfare, et cetera, and understand child protection completely, and that's where that would happen.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Thank you. Do you want to add anything to that, Mr Kilgallon?

MR KILGALLON: I think that's absolutely essential. Certainly I found in the work I did in the UK with the Church that one of the best ways of getting people into training was the commitment that the bishops and congregation leaders made that they would themselves have safeguarding training on a regular basis, and so they could

1 then encourage or direct people in the Church, their  
2 priests, their religious, to follow that example.

3  
4 And you're absolutely right, it's creating a culture  
5 in an organisation where people can report concerns, where  
6 they will be listened to and it will be acted upon. That's  
7 absolutely essential in any organisation.

8  
9 COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Thank you for that.

10  
11 Baroness Hollins, can I just ask you - you mentioned,  
12 as I understood it, in your evidence before the Commission,  
13 that there was a difficulty perhaps for the Pope in terms  
14 of removing a bishop from office without very, very strong  
15 evidence to do so. Is that a fair summary of what you  
16 said?

17  
18 BARONESS HOLLINS: I think it's about being - I mean, for  
19 any legal process to take place, people need to have a case  
20 presented and for that case to be clearly presented. It  
21 shouldn't just be on the word of - it shouldn't, in my  
22 view, be done just privately, quietly, without some kind of  
23 process. We were told that there was no such process; that  
24 if there was a complaint about a bishop, it would probably  
25 be a cardinal who would take that case. They're restricted  
26 to such a process.

27  
28 COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Could I just ask you, are you  
29 aware generally of any bishops that have been removed from  
30 office in the United Kingdom?

31  
32 BARONESS HOLLINS: Well, I know of bishops that are - Bill  
33 probably knows, because in your previous job you would know  
34 whether that had happened. I'm aware of one bishop at the  
35 moment who has been stood aside from his diocese pending  
36 investigation.

37  
38 COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Do you know if that's for failure  
39 to act in terms of child sexual abuse matters?

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41 BARONESS HOLLINS: That wasn't in terms of child sexual  
42 abuse, no.

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44 COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Do you know what it was for?

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46 BARONESS HOLLINS: It was for an allegation of a sexual  
47 relationship with one or more women.

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COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: And no other matters that you're aware of in the United Kingdom where a bishop has been removed from office?

BARONESS HOLLINS: I'm not. I don't know whether Bill Kilgallon is aware?

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Perhaps Mr Kilgallon might respond. Thank you.

MR KILGALLON: Sheila is correct, that a bishop in England was removed. He has been replaced. In another part of the United Kingdom, Scotland, which in Church terms is a separate country and separate hierarchy, the cardinal there was stood down as a cardinal because of inappropriate sexual behaviour with adult males who were - he was in a position of power over them as a seminary rector and then as a bishop.

COMMISSIONER ATKINSON: Thank you.

MR KILGALLON: And there's one fairly close to here, the Archbishop in Guam is currently being processed by the Vatican. He's been accused of abusing children, and there's a statute of limitations in Guam, because it's a US dependency, and the US is very keen on statutes of limitations, and he's currently going through a Vatican trial. He's the most local to here that I know of.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Baroness Hollins, it's Commissioner Murray here. Earlier in your evidence you said that one of the important issues included transparency and openness. The evidence to the Royal Commission in Australia has been that a lack of internal accountability and a culture of secrecy and concealment, even between bishops and within individual dioceses, has allowed damage to accelerate and accumulate because matters weren't dealt with in a timely and responsive fashion - tremendous damage, therefore, to the Church's reputation.

Overcoming a culture like that is a massive enterprise. Do you genuinely, as an involved person in the Pontifical Commission, believe there is a climate at large to end that culture of secrecy and concealment and to really introduce genuine transparency and openness and internal accountability at least?

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BARONESS HOLLINS: I think this is a really big difficulty and I think it's associated with - I think it's linked to clericalism. I think to change that culture is really, really difficult. The remarkable film that was made about the sexual abuse situation in Boston, which I presume you've seen?

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Yes, yes.

BARONESS HOLLINS: We watched that as the Commission, and fundamentally one of the things that it showed was the way in which secrecy was really so damaging. My feeling is that that film ought to be watched by Church leaders all over the world so that they can understand how that came about and how damaging it was. Sometimes one needs different ways to try to get across to people just what secrecy means.

For me as a psychiatrist, I've seen it all the time, in families where they will keep secrets, or in organisations where secrets are kept, because it's felt that if the truth came out it would hurt people more. And it's exactly the reverse: the truth is usually much less bad, you know, than what people fear.

So secrecy is a bad thing, on the whole. But people don't understand that and it's really, really hard to change cultures.

COMMISSIONER MURRAY: That was the point of my question. I'm not yet convinced that the climate exists for that culture to change in that fashion.

BARONESS HOLLINS: I don't think it's just an edict from above which can change it. I think it's the process which has to be undergone, and there are lots of people trying to change that culture. The Pontifical Commission is one of them.

But it takes a long time to change cultures. I know that from my work with institutions, for example. One of your research reports, which was about institutions, showed how difficult it is in total institutions, in closed institutions, to help people to change and to understand the harm that's caused by those kinds of closed organisations.

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COMMISSIONER MURRAY: Thank you, Baroness.

THE CHAIR: Ms Needham?

<EXAMINATION BY MS NEEDHAM:

MS NEEDHAM: Baroness, just a couple of questions to you. Can you hear me?

BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes, I can.

MS NEEDHAM: Thank you. It's Jane Needham. I'm representing the Truth, Justice and Healing Council in this hearing. You were asked some questions about how the Commission was formed and your role in choosing personnel for the Commission. Do you recall those?

BARONESS HOLLINS: Yes. I didn't choose people. The members were asked to help to identify members, and so I participated actively in making inquiries through my own networks to see whether I could identify people with the right skills.

MS NEEDHAM: You noted that there was a balance of gender and a mix of clerical and lay members on the Commission. Was that a thoughtful process which was engaged in to have that outcome?

BARONESS HOLLINS: For me, it was absolutely imperative that the Commission members would include a majority of laypeople, and it was also very important for me that there should be an equal number of women, because I felt that without it, the Commission wouldn't have any credibility and there would be a real risk that the lay voice would be marginalised. I also felt that it was very important that the survivor voice should be present, however hard that might be for survivors. And that is in fact what we have achieved. We have achieved I think an equal number of women and the majority of laypeople.

MS NEEDHAM: Has there been, to your observation, an acceptance by the Holy Father of advice from a body with a balance of women and a majority of laypeople?

BARONESS HOLLINS: Absolutely, yes.

1 MS NEEDHAM: Now, on day one of the hearing, Ms Furness  
2 opened in a statement, which I think you have seen, and  
3 noted that you had declined the Chair's invitation to give  
4 oral evidence, preferring to rely on a submission. Do you  
5 have a comment about that?  
6

7 BARONESS HOLLINS: Well, I felt that the questions that  
8 were being asked were quite complex and that to answer  
9 those through videolink would be very difficult and I said  
10 that I preferred to give written evidence.  
11

12 I submitted my written evidence and had expected that  
13 I might have some follow-ups requesting further information  
14 or, indeed, if people were still wanting to have a video  
15 interview with me, they would ask. But I in fact had no  
16 further response to the submission that I made until very  
17 recently.  
18

19 MS NEEDHAM: Thank you, Baroness.  
20

21 Finally, for Mr Kilgallon, you were asked some  
22 questions about tab 46 of the tender bundle, which is the  
23 guidelines, the template guidelines. These came up in  
24 evidence I think last week and there was some query about  
25 the status of the guidelines - whether they were draft or  
26 in development or whether that was the final form. Would  
27 you be able to give your assistance to the Commission on  
28 that point?  
29

30 MR KILGALLON: Yes, this is the final form. The reference  
31 at the top, on the website, to - I think it says a beta  
32 version, is the beta version of the website, not of the  
33 content. So it's the website that's still in development.  
34

35 MS NEEDHAM: Thank you. No further questions.  
36

37 MS FURNESS: Your Honour, just one matter arising from the  
38 guidelines. There's reference in part 9 to responding to  
39 complaints of abuse, and the second dot point says:  
40

41 There should be a clear statement about  
42 compliance with the requirements of civil  
43 authorities and Church authorities ...  
44 [including] any civil requirements on  
45 mandatory reporting.  
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47 MR KILGALLON: Yes.

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MS FURNESS: I think Cardinal O'Malley has said recently that his view was that there was a moral obligation to report, notwithstanding a legal requirement. Do you remember him saying that?

MR KILGALLON: I do indeed, yes.

MS FURNESS: Was there a discussion, when developing these guidelines, about whether his view should be reflected in the guidelines?

MR KILGALLON: Yes. There's a discussion, and it's a continuing one, about how we can have a guideline on mandatory reporting for all countries, because there are some countries in which we have been told by people living there that for somebody to report abuse to the civil authority puts them at risk, particularly in countries where there are particular versions of sharia law. For example, if a woman reports a sexual assault by a man, she can, in some countries, be also gaoled for having sexual intercourse outside marriage, even though it was unwilling; she wasn't consenting.

So in some countries, it would present a real difficulty in protecting the victim. Now, we need to phrase that in such a way that that doesn't give a let-out to those countries which do have a proper system of reporting and where it would be safe to report.

So I think that my assessment is that the guidance will be adapted to say - and this is certainly what we're looking at, so it's a bit premature to say it will be agreed, but it is likely to say, in my view - that the general rule should be that the Church reports offences except where a country establishes very clearly that that would create greater risk for the victim. And, sadly, there are those countries. And of course there are countries where it's not considered to be a crime.

MS FURNESS: You say that's your assessment of the guidance that may come. Has it been discussed within the Commission to know whether the majority view is --

MR KILGALLON: Yes, and it's being discussed again next month, yes.



1 MS FURNESS: Are you in the majority?

2

3 MR KILGALLON: I don't know. I think the difficulty for  
4 some countries that has been expressed to us is that they  
5 see it as a very western solution. You know, they say,  
6 "It's okay for you in countries where there is  
7 a trustworthy police force", but in a country where there  
8 isn't that trust, where there isn't a reliable civil  
9 authority, and where that person would be at risk, then  
10 they've got to exercise some judgment about that.

11

12 So I think we have to find a way of - and that's one  
13 of the challenges of working across the world, that we're  
14 talking to some countries where the most significant abuse  
15 of children is that they're drafted into the armed forces  
16 at the age of seven and eight; they become child soldiers;  
17 in other countries where the biggest issue is that children  
18 are being sold into sex trafficking, and that's often with  
19 the connivance and the involvement of authorities rather  
20 than expecting any protection from authorities. So that's  
21 a really difficult issue for countries that, as I say, are  
22 at a stage where they don't have stable civil government  
23 and a government that accepts that this is a crime.

24

25 MS FURNESS: The way you have spoken of dealing with it -  
26 that is, an exception where it would do harm to report - is  
27 one way of dealing with those two very different systems,  
28 isn't it?

29

30 MR KILGALLON: That's my view, yes, that we'd need to move  
31 to that, because I think it's important that people realise  
32 that abusing children is a crime and that people who do it  
33 should be prosecuted. There should be no question about  
34 that. Anybody who abuses a child should be prosecuted.  
35 They're criminals.

36

37 MS FURNESS: Baroness, do you have anything you want to  
38 add to that issue?

39

40 BARONESS HOLLINS: I think it has been the position in  
41 Rome for quite a long time that bishops should fully  
42 cooperate, but this was raised at the conference in the  
43 Gregorian University when a bishop asked  
44 Monsignor Scicluna, the protector, the promoter of justice  
45 at the CDF, how far is a bishop required to cooperate, and  
46 he said a bishop is required to fully cooperate with civil  
47 authorities.

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The issue of mandatory reporting is always going to be a contentious one in different countries. In the United Kingdom we don't have mandatory reporting in the same way that you do in many Australian states - I don't think all, do you? And there are members of the Commission, the Pontifical Commission, who feel very strongly that nothing less than mandatory reporting for the whole world should be introduced.

I think one of the difficulties we are facing is trying to define what is meant by it. Bill Kilgallon explained I think very well how that obligation to cooperate may need to be modified according to the reliability of civil authorities in those countries. Of course, that could be seen as being a very difficult one. But the Church does expect the Church leadership in each country to determine how they work within that country's legal framework.

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

THE CHAIR: Yes, that brings this discussion to an end. Can I thank you all for your contribution.

Baroness, I'm sorry if there was a misunderstanding about your giving evidence, but we are very glad that you were able to join us today.

As may be apparent from what I've said already, we see the work that you're doing as a very important part of the Church's response, which of course will assist the Church to perhaps come to terms with the recommendations we will make in due course.

Can I thank you again and excuse you from further attendance.

<THE WITNESSES WITHDREW

THE CHAIR: We will adjourn to 2 o'clock.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

MS FURNESS: Thank you, your Honour. The purpose of today's panel is to largely understand the work that has

1           been done in the five metropolitan archdioceses and the  
2           reforms that have been undertaken to ensure the protection  
3           of children, and we have each of the archbishops present to  
4           give evidence today.

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6           <MARK BENEDICT COLERIDGE, on former oath:           [2.03pm]

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8           <DENIS JAMES HART, sworn:                           [2.03pm]

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10          <ANTHONY COLIN JOSEPH FISHER, sworn:           [2.03pm]

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12          <PHILIP EDWARD WILSON, sworn:                   [2.03pm]

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14          <TIMOTHY JOHN COSTELLOE, sworn:                [2.03pm]

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16          <EXAMINATION BY MS FURNESS:

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18          THE CHAIR:    Archbishop, I trust you feel comfortable  
19                        there. We didn't have a capacity to accommodate you with  
20                        the other four.

21  
22          ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE:    I feel demoted, your Honour, but  
23                        very satisfied.

24  
25          THE CHAIR:    Very well. Thank you.

26  
27          MS FURNESS:    I will start with you, Archbishop Coleridge.  
28                        Would you tell the Royal Commission again your full name?

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30          ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE:    Mark Benedict Coleridge.

31  
32          MS FURNESS:    You are the Archbishop of Brisbane?

33  
34          ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE:    The Archbishop of Brisbane;  
35                        correct.

36  
37          MS FURNESS:    Could I turn to you, Archbishop Hart. Would  
38                        you tell the Royal Commission your full name?

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40          ARCHBISHOP HART:    Denis James Hart.

41  
42          MS FURNESS:    Archbishop, you have given evidence before  
43                        the Royal Commission earlier?

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45          ARCHBISHOP HART:    I have.

46  
47          MS FURNESS:    You are the Archbishop of Melbourne?

1  
2 ARCHBISHOP HART: Correct.  
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4 MS FURNESS: Archbishop Fisher?  
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6 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: I'm Anthony Colin Joseph Fisher and  
7 I am the Archbishop of Sydney.  
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9 MS FURNESS: You haven't given evidence earlier, have you?  
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11 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: I have not.  
12  
13 MS FURNESS: Archbishop Wilson?  
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15 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Philip Edward Wilson, the Archbishop  
16 of Adelaide.  
17  
18 MS FURNESS: And you have given evidence earlier?  
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20 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Twice.  
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22 MS FURNESS: And --  
23  
24 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Timothy John Costelloe, the  
25 Archbishop of Perth.  
26  
27 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Each of you has provided  
28 a statement to the Royal Commission answering a series of  
29 questions that were put to you; that's right?  
30  
31 (ALL ARCHBISHOPS): Yes.  
32  
33 MS FURNESS: And you have referred to a range of  
34 policies, procedures and reforms that have been undertaken  
35 in relation to each of your archdioceses. Each of those  
36 documents has been tendered and is in evidence, just so  
37 that you are aware that it is already before the  
38 Royal Commission.  
39  
40 Can I start with you, Archbishop Costelloe. You have  
41 a copy of your statement before you?  
42  
43 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I do, yes.  
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45 MS FURNESS: If I can turn to paragraph 6 of your  
46 statement - do the Commissioners have access to that  
47 statement?

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JUSTICE COATE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: As a preamble, as it were, to your statement, you gave reasons as to why you considered that the reforms that you have set out in your statement were necessary?

ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: The first reason you give is:

The high incidence of sexual abuse of minors by clergy, religious and other Church personnel in the Catholic Church indicates that there has been catastrophic failure in relation to the protection of children in the Church in Australia.

ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: Is that a catastrophic failure of leadership?

ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: It certainly is a catastrophic failure of leadership, yes. I think it's a catastrophic failure in many respects, but primarily in leadership, yes.

MS FURNESS: What other respects?

ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Well, in the sense, I suppose, many of the things that I would mention in many ways relate to poor leadership. One of the things that occurs to me is that the very reality of the sexual abuse of children and young people is such a fundamental betrayal of what the Catholic Church purports to stand for that I have spent a lot of time reflecting on how it is that someone who has given his or her life to the Church could be engaged in these kinds of activities.

That leads me to reflect that there has also been a catastrophic failure in - the best way I can express it is in keeping people faithful to the commitments they made. So I ask myself what can possibly have gone wrong or what was missing or what has been out of balance that could lead not just to one, which would be bad enough, but to countless, countless people failing in this way.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Wilson, can I ask you

1           whether you share Archbishop Costelloe's view in relation  
2           to the catastrophic failure primarily in terms of  
3           leadership but in other matters?  
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5           ARCHBISHOP WILSON:    Yes, I do share that.  
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7           MS FURNESS:    Archbishop Fisher?  
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9           ARCHBISHOP FISHER:    I do also.  
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11          MS FURNESS:    Archbishop Hart?  
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13          ARCHBISHOP HART:    Certainly.  
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15          MS FURNESS:    Archbishop Coleridge?  
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17          ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE:    Yes, I would agree.  
18  
19          MS FURNESS:    Coming back to you, Archbishop Costelloe, in  
20          your second point, you refer to the response to the scandal  
21          by some church authorities, especially in the past, as  
22          hopelessly inadequate.  
23  
24          ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE:    Yes.  
25  
26          MS FURNESS:    Is that the strongest term you think applies  
27          to the response of some Church authorities to the scandal?  
28  
29          ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE:    I think it is a fair description.  
30          It perhaps could be augmented by other descriptions.  
31          I think it has been scandalously insufficient, hopelessly  
32          inadequate, scandalously inefficient. I'm struggling for  
33          other words. It's just such a fundamental failure that  
34          I am not sure what else I could say.  
35  
36          MS FURNESS:    The consequences of that hopelessly  
37          inadequate response have been catastrophic, haven't they?  
38  
39          ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE:    Yes, yes.  
40  
41          MS FURNESS:    Archbishop Wilson, do you agree with  
42          Archbishop Costelloe's view as to the response of the  
43          Church?  
44  
45          ARCHBISHOP WILSON:    I do. I think that people were all at  
46          sea and really unaware of what they needed to do.  
47

1 MS FURNESS: That's perhaps a reason for it rather than  
2 the nature of it. Is there anything more you would say  
3 about the nature of the response?  
4

5 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: I would agree with what  
6 Archbishop Costelloe said about that. I think that his  
7 description of it is really accurate.  
8

9 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Fisher?  
10

11 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Yes, I entirely agree. I think you  
12 might want to use stronger words in some cases, that it was  
13 a kind of criminal negligence to deal with some of the  
14 problems that were staring us in the face.  
15

16 In other cases, I think there were people that were  
17 just like rabbits in the headlights. They just had no idea  
18 what to do, and their performance was appalling.  
19

20 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Hart?  
21

22 ARCHBISHOP HART: I would make my own very much the words  
23 that Archbishop Fisher used and the description that he  
24 gave - totally, totally inadequate. Just totally wrong.  
25

26 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Coleridge?  
27

28 ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: It strikes me that the failure,  
29 which was colossal, was in some ways a colossal failure of  
30 culture, because, you see, you had leaders who were in  
31 themselves good and decent and experienced men but who, in  
32 very different places and different times, made exactly the  
33 same mistakes without comparing notes or even talking to  
34 each other about it informally.  
35

36 Now, where you find those kinds of convergences,  
37 I think that's when you are dealing with culture. If it  
38 was, as I think it is, a colossal failure of leadership, it  
39 did amount - and I think this has emerged through the  
40 process of the Royal Commission - in important ways as  
41 a colossal failure of culture that led to the colossal  
42 failure of leadership.  
43

44 MS FURNESS: Coming back to you, Archbishop Costelloe, in  
45 your last subpoint under subparagraph 6 you say:  
46

47 Because the Catholic Church, as an

1 institution, has been responsible for many  
2 shocking incidents ... the Church has an  
3 obligation to now be a significant part of  
4 the solution ...  
5  
6 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.  
7  
8 MS FURNESS: Now, this statement of yours was signed in  
9 September of last year?  
10  
11 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.  
12  
13 MS FURNESS: Since that date, you have no doubt become  
14 aware of the data by the Church authorities in relation to  
15 claims of sexual abuse?  
16  
17 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.  
18  
19 MS FURNESS: Is there anything you would revise in  
20 relation to that paragraph, having regard to the data you  
21 are now aware of?  
22  
23 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I'm not exactly sure what the --  
24  
25 MS FURNESS: You refer to there being "many shocking  
26 incidents of child sexual abuse".  
27  
28 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.  
29  
30 MS FURNESS: Is there anything you would want to add to  
31 that in light of the data from the Catholic Church  
32 authorities that you are now aware of?  
33  
34 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Well, I suppose, as I read it, the  
35 word "many" might just be completely inadequate. When the  
36 data was released, I looked both broadly at the data for  
37 the whole of Australia and, in particular, of course, also  
38 at the data for my own archdiocese. It's a sad thing to  
39 have to admit, but I wasn't surprised. I've been the  
40 archbishop for five years. I've dealt with many  
41 allegations and sat with many survivors of sexual abuse.  
42 Sometimes I get very discouraged because it seems that  
43 every - you know, quite regularly, in a sense, another  
44 complaint will come forward, and you start to wonder, you  
45 know, just how extensive this is.  
46  
47 So I wasn't surprised by it. I would have to confess



1 that I was surprised that our percentage - not that it was  
2 as high as it was but that it was amongst one of the  
3 highest in the country, because I had thought that other  
4 dioceses might have an even worse record than our own.  
5

6 Every time we face these statistics or come across  
7 another allegation or find another person whose life has  
8 been so damaged by sexual abuse, it's a shocking thing, and  
9 so I think you can be unsurprised but nevertheless  
10 constantly shocked and horrified.  
11

12 I think what I was trying to say in the last point  
13 there is that precisely because we have failed so badly,  
14 our society has a right to expect us to do what we can to  
15 contribute to a solution, if we can. I mean, there may be  
16 many people who would think that our record and our  
17 reputation is so damaged that we have nothing to offer, and  
18 I would understand that, but I think that, tragically and  
19 unfortunately, we have learnt an awful lot about this  
20 terrible scourge.  
21

22 We have over the years, not just in my diocese but  
23 around the country, made a number of attempts to respond to  
24 it, some more successful than others. So there are some  
25 learnings there that I think we might be able to offer for  
26 consideration by the wider society. That was the point  
27 I was trying to make.  
28

29 MS FURNESS: You are saying in that point, aren't you,  
30 that it is an institutional responsibility for what has  
31 happened?  
32

33 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes, I am, yes.  
34

35 MS FURNESS: Archbishop Wilson, you would agree that the  
36 Catholic Church as an institution is responsible for the  
37 events?  
38

39 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: I would agree with that. On the other  
40 hand, would I say that when you look at the nature of the  
41 Catholic Church, it is more complex than just saying that  
42 it is an institution. There are some institutional aspects  
43 of it which were failures here, but there are many people  
44 who belong to our Church who were not responsible for this.  
45

46 MS FURNESS: Are you talking about parishioners and  
47 congregationers and the like?

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ARCHBISHOP WILSON: I am.

MS FURNESS: You are not talking about the leadership of the Church or office holders of the Church?

ARCHBISHOP WILSON: No, no, I'm just saying there is a distinction, when you are talking about responsibility, between those two groups.

MS FURNESS: Archbishop Fisher, do you have anything to add to that?

ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Yes, I think I would want to say it is both - there are individuals that should be held to account for terrible deeds or terrible failures to respond once they knew of things happening, and then there is the sense in which the institution as a whole, or the Catholic community as a whole, hangs its head in shame and its leaders in particular have to do what they can to bring about redress and healing, to make sure we are a safer Church in the future. So I think it's both the corporate and the individual responsibility and we have to hold everyone to account.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Hart?

ARCHBISHOP HART: I certainly would be totally committed to what has been said already and would endorse that as if they were my own words. But I also say that because it has been so awful, so cataclysmic, that we have a much more serious responsibility to be part of remaking and of the future.

MS FURNESS: Archbishop Coleridge, I know you have spoken on these matters before. Do you wish to add anything?

ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: Just to say that I do think we are dealing with a very powerful and complex interplay between individual and institutional responsibility. I would never underestimate the institutional responsibility, but it doesn't cancel the individual responsibility.

The other thing is Archbishop Costelloe speaks about the possibility of being part of a solution. It seems to me it is not just a possibility; it is an obligation that we have, to be part of the solution, but not on our own, to

1 be working with others, whoever the others may be, to be  
2 part of the solution. I see that as a most solemn  
3 obligation imposed upon us, first of all, by the demands of  
4 the gospel but, secondly, by the demands of responsible  
5 citizenship.

6  
7 I say this as a leader of an institution that is  
8 hugely embedded in this society and therefore has a special  
9 responsibility to exercise responsible citizenship, which,  
10 in this particular regard, we have failed to do.

11  
12 MS FURNESS: I will come back to the question of why,  
13 which you have touched upon, Archbishop Costelloe.

14  
15 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

16  
17 MS FURNESS: As I have indicated, there are various  
18 reforms that each of you has instituted and there are  
19 policies, practices and guidelines which have been provided  
20 to the Royal Commission, and I will come back to those in  
21 some detail as well.

22  
23 But firstly looking at what you have done individually  
24 in response to the tsunami, as it has been described, each  
25 of you has at some stage apologised, I think. Perhaps if  
26 I can start with you, Archbishop Costelloe. Have you  
27 issued an apology?

28  
29 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I have, yes, on a number of  
30 occasions, yes.

31  
32 MS FURNESS: Were those apologies in writing?

33  
34 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: They were, yes. What I have done,  
35 generally speaking, is in what we would call pastoral  
36 letters, letters to the people, the Catholic community of  
37 the Archdiocese of Perth, I have tried to address these  
38 matters on probably four or five occasions in the  
39 five years that I've been there, and I have included in  
40 those what I know to be a very sincere apology - I hope  
41 that it has been understood that way - to the victims and  
42 survivors. Yes.

43  
44 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Wilson?

45  
46 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: In both of the dioceses that I've been  
47 involved with, I have issued apologies.

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MS FURNESS: In the same format as Archbishop Costelloe?

ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Pretty much in writing but also verbally in some circumstances, too.

MS FURNESS: At public meetings and the like?

ARCHBISHOP WILSON: In a couple of cases, it was public meetings, yes.

MS FURNESS: Archbishop Fisher?

ARCHBISHOP FISHER: I have, in both the dioceses I have had responsibility for, in writing, as videos that people access on the internet, that are played in all the Churches, from the pulpit, at public meetings - in lots of different formats.

I also authored for all the bishops of my province, all the bishops of New South Wales, a joint letter of apology a few years ago, and I have kept saying again and again, as loudly as I can, no excuses, no cover-ups, no paedophiles ever again near our churches and schools. And I repeat again in this forum today my apology for the shameful things that have happened, especially the harm to the victims.

MS FURNESS: Archbishop Hart?

ARCHBISHOP HART: Certainly in writing and in public statements, I've expressed how gravely I feel at the situation, that people have been wronged and the terrible, terrible suffering that people have undergone. On behalf of the Church and in meeting with individual victims and others, too, I've tried to express myself, I know in inadequate ways, just how sorry I am that these things ever happened, which are the very opposite of what the Church should be about and the contribution we should be making to society.

MS FURNESS: Archbishop Coleridge?

ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: Yes, like the other archbishops, on a number of occasions and in various parts of Australia, I have offered written apologies and things like pastoral letters. I have offered apology in videoed messages but

1 also verbally, both publicly and privately. It has  
2 certainly been a crucial part of my dealings with survivors  
3 of abuse. So in various ways, I have sought to offer an  
4 apology that has grown in strength and sincerity, I have to  
5 say, through the years.

6  
7 MS FURNESS: Each of you, I take it, will accept that the  
8 delivery of apologies and the creation and publication of  
9 practices, policies and guidelines is necessary but not  
10 sufficient in terms of dealing with child sexual abuse by  
11 clergy; do you all accept that?

12  
13 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Yes.

14  
15 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Yes.

16  
17 ARCHBISHOP HART: Yes.

18  
19 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

20  
21 MS FURNESS: What has appeared in the evidence before the  
22 Royal Commission generally and also the evidence of the  
23 Baroness this morning is that what is most needed is for  
24 the victim survivors to be listened to by the leadership of  
25 the Church. Now, each of you accepts that that evidence is  
26 real?

27  
28 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

29  
30 ARCHBISHOP HART: Yes.

31  
32 MS FURNESS: Again, can I start with you  
33 Archbishop Costelloe: can you tell us what you personally  
34 have done in terms of listening to individual victims and  
35 survivors?

36  
37 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Really, my listening is almost  
38 exclusively focused on my private meetings with survivors  
39 of sexual abuse at the end of the process of engagement  
40 with the Towards Healing protocols. I always meet the  
41 survivor of sexual abuse in a facilitation meeting, is the  
42 way the professional standards, Towards Healing protocols  
43 describe it. That can sometimes be a very lengthy  
44 encounter, and we certainly give it whatever time it needs.  
45 It always also includes an expression - and, again, I know  
46 it to be a genuine expression - of apology, of sorrow, of  
47 regret, of shame for what has happened.

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And, yes, part of that process, the structure of that process, is to give the survivor as much time and opportunity as he or she needs to tell the story and for me, as the archbishop, to assure them not only that I have listened to them but that I believe them, and I think that that is a very important part of the process.

MS FURNESS: That is in the context of a person coming to your archdiocese --

ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: -- making a claim or seeking some form of redress under Towards Healing?

ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Making a complaint, yes. That's --

MS FURNESS: The meeting is conducted with you, the survivor and whoever else she or he wants present?

ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Always it is monitored, I guess is the word I would use, by someone who facilitates it. That's why it is called a facilitation. So an independent person who acts as a kind of a facilitator of the encounter; there is the survivor, himself or herself, with a support person or anybody else that they may want to bring with them, with me as the Church leader and normally with someone that I would have to support me as well.

MS FURNESS: That is at the initiative of the survivor?

ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: It is part of the process, if the survivor chooses to have it, yes.

MS FURNESS: Thank you. Now, in your statement you refer to the Towards Healing process.

ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

MS FURNESS: If we can turn to paragraph 28 of that statement, you refer there to:

Where the findings of the assessment do not satisfy the Archbishop - that is you - of the truth of the complaint, the Director of Professional Standards may recommend that

1 the Archbishop respond to the victim in  
2 a pastoral meeting.

3  
4 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

5  
6 MS FURNESS: That's not the meeting you have described, is  
7 it?

8  
9 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: No, that's a different meeting.  
10 The facilitation meeting is at the end of the Towards  
11 Healing process. Perhaps if I could just explain briefly.  
12 When an allegation is brought forth, or a complaint,  
13 sometimes the person who is being accused is deceased, and  
14 that is in fact most of the time, in my experience in the  
15 situations that I've dealt with in Perth. But occasionally  
16 the perpetrator, the alleged perpetrator, may still be  
17 alive. If he or she - and normally it is he, of course -  
18 disputes that or denies it, then the process of Towards  
19 Healing would be that some independent assessors are  
20 appointed to look into the story, basically.

21  
22 Now, they are independent of me. I don't appoint  
23 them. The director of professional standards appoints  
24 them. They conduct some inquiries, to the best that they  
25 are able to, and according to the protocols of Towards  
26 Healing, as I understand them, they reach a finding on what  
27 I think is understood to be on the balance of  
28 probabilities, which I think is the level of evidence, if  
29 that's the right word, for civil cases. I think that's  
30 right. I think that's the procedure.

31  
32 MS FURNESS: Is it the case that it is invariably you who  
33 meets with the survivor when indeed they wish a meeting  
34 with the Church to take place?

35  
36 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I would normally meet with the  
37 survivor right at the end of the process.

38  
39 MS FURNESS: But is it you from the Church that meets with  
40 the survivor or may it be you or a senior member of the  
41 Church?

42  
43 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Normally, unless I am unavailable  
44 for some reason, some serious reason - for example, I think  
45 we had a case where the process was coming to an end; I was  
46 away and would be away for some weeks, and so we gave the  
47 survivor the option of waiting until I returned or meeting

1 the auxiliary bishop or the vicar general. So it is always  
2 one of the leaders of the Church - one of the leaders of  
3 the Church authority, but with very few exceptions, it is  
4 me.

5  
6 MS FURNESS: Outside the formal facilitation process that  
7 you have described, have you met with survivors  
8 individually?

9  
10 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Sometimes the first approach is  
11 directly to me, and depending on the nature of that  
12 approach, I might meet with the person who is making the  
13 allegation or the complaint initially. And I'm willing to  
14 do that, but I'm sensitive to the fact that often it's very  
15 difficult for people to have to tell this story over and  
16 over again, and if they tell it to me, which I'm happy to  
17 hear, the next step is then to go to the Professional  
18 Standards Office and tell it again, and then they may have  
19 to tell it again to prepare a contact report. So my  
20 practice really is, as quickly as I can, to refer someone  
21 immediately to the Professional Standards Office.

22  
23 MS FURNESS: Have you met with victims outside of the  
24 Towards Healing process?

25  
26 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: On rare occasions, yes. Sometimes  
27 a person will prefer not to go through the Towards Healing  
28 process, doesn't really want to go through a legal process,  
29 but just wants to meet with the Church authority. On two  
30 or three occasions, I have done that, yes.

31  
32 MS FURNESS: Have you indicated to those within your  
33 archdiocese a willingness to meet with survivors who wish  
34 to talk to you outside of any redress process?

35  
36 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I can't say that I've made public  
37 statements about that, no. The people who deal with these  
38 matters in the archdiocese know that I'm very prepared to  
39 meet with people, but it's not kind of a public  
40 announcement. Perhaps it should be.

41  
42 MS FURNESS: Archbishop Wilson?

43  
44 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: The majority of meetings that I've had  
45 with survivors has been as a result of the Towards Healing  
46 process in the facilitated meetings. There have been other  
47 occasions when I have met people who are survivors as well



1 on a private basis. They have just asked to talk to me.  
2 I've tried to make it clear to people that I'm willing and  
3 open to talk in any set of circumstances.  
4

5 I have to say, though, to be honest, that sometimes  
6 that's not successful. There are some parts of our  
7 experience in Adelaide that we weren't - I wasn't happy  
8 that we did it as well as we could, and that was something  
9 that was pointed out to me in the report from the  
10 Royal Commission that came to study what happened in regard  
11 to that particular case.  
12

13 So it's of big value for me, and sometimes I have  
14 failed in that area, but I would really make it a high  
15 point to try to engage with the survivors as much as I can.  
16

17 MS FURNESS: It seems from your answer that your position  
18 is similar to Archbishop Costelloe's, which is that the  
19 vast majority of your meetings are within the formal  
20 facilitation stage of Towards Healing?  
21

22 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: That's right. That's right.  
23

24 MS FURNESS: Have you indicated broadly to those within  
25 your community a willingness to speak to survivors who wish  
26 to speak to you outside of any redress process?  
27

28 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: I don't think I've done that  
29 explicitly, but I've certainly given the message out in the  
30 community that I would be willing to see people and talk to  
31 them. But I've never made a statement explicitly saying  
32 that.  
33

34 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Fisher?  
35

36 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: I have had a number of meetings with  
37 survivors or family members of survivors, both within  
38 Towards Healing and outside Towards Healing. Sometimes  
39 people have just asked to meet me; they don't want to go  
40 through the Towards Healing process, but they want me to  
41 hear or the Church to hear or they want to hear me say I'm  
42 sorry for what has happened. So I've had those.  
43

44 On a few occasions I can think of, I've actually  
45 reached out to someone that I've thought, from reading  
46 their story or hearing about them, wasn't dealt with as  
47 well as they could be. I've actually initiated the contact

1 or offered it. So it has happened in those different ways.

2  
3 Also, I've had some contact with some survivors  
4 groups, too, and that has been another way I've  
5 encountered, where they've come perhaps three or four of  
6 them as a group, wanting to tell me some things.

7  
8 So in those different ways, I've had conversations  
9 with survivors, heard their stories and tried, as best  
10 I can, to tell them how ashamed and sorry I am for what has  
11 happened.

12  
13 MS FURNESS: Is it invariably the case that it is you, as  
14 representative of the archdiocese, who meets with those  
15 survivors going through Towards Healing who wish to meet  
16 with a Church representative?

17  
18 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Any ones that I hear of that want to  
19 meet me - and I'm convinced my staff know that - we make  
20 that happen. Now, it may be that sometimes it's not as  
21 quick as they might like. But as far as I know, I don't  
22 know of any case of someone who is in that situation of  
23 having asked my professional standards people to meet the  
24 archbishop, or been offered that, and then found they  
25 couldn't because I wasn't available.

26  
27 MS FURNESS: Is it the case that you meet them in  
28 circumstances where they make a specific request;  
29 otherwise, your vicar general usually meets them?

30  
31 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: That would be right. Normally at  
32 first instance, the vicar general and the director of  
33 professional standards would be the people they would first  
34 meet. As soon as they form a view that it would be  
35 helpful, they will even suggest it to the survivor. So it  
36 doesn't have to be them demanding or asking to see me. It  
37 might also be proposed to them if it was thought that that  
38 would be helpful to them. Some people like that. Other  
39 people are understandably very angry and the last thing  
40 they want to do is to meet me. But either way, I try to  
41 accede to any request.

42  
43 MS FURNESS: Similar to the question I've asked the other  
44 two archbishops, have you made known in your community  
45 a willingness outside of a redress process to speak with  
46 anyone who wishes?

47

1 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Probably only implicitly, in that I've  
2 talked about the different survivors who have come to talk  
3 to me and their harrowing stories and the shame I have  
4 felt. So I have made it clear to my people that I do meet  
5 with survivors, that I'm not behind some protective wall.  
6 But I haven't put out a 1800 number for anyone that wants  
7 to ring me, that's true.

8  
9 I have made it clear to my Professional Standards  
10 Office - and it's usually the first people they make  
11 contact with - that I would be available. So in that  
12 indirect way, I suppose, it is made clear. But I haven't  
13 made a public statement, "Call this number and the  
14 archbishop will be available."

15  
16 MS FURNESS: Have you visited with survivors outside of  
17 the Church structure?

18  
19 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Yes. I've gone for walks in parks.  
20 Sometimes they have said they don't want to go near  
21 a Church building or a Church office, and I've gone to  
22 them. I remember meeting one in a coffee shop, one in  
23 a cricket field - other places, yes.

24  
25 MS FURNESS: What period of time are we talking about,  
26 Archbishop Fisher, with your involvement with Towards  
27 Healing?

28  
29 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: I have been the archbishop now for  
30 two years, and for five years before that I was Bishop of  
31 Parramatta, so it is seven years now that I've had some  
32 responsibility in those areas.

33  
34 MS FURNESS: Most of your engagements have been with  
35 survivors at Parramatta?

36  
37 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Yes, most have been at Parramatta.

38  
39 MS FURNESS: Significantly less in Sydney?

40  
41 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Significantly less in Sydney. You may  
42 know I was in hospital for most of last year, and so I have  
43 only really had about a year in office as Archbishop of  
44 Sydney.

45  
46 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Hart?

47

1 ARCHBISHOP HART: Certainly. I've always made the  
2 opportunity available for individuals who want to talk with  
3 me, whether in a formal context at the end of the process  
4 or at any other time.

5  
6 I realise how difficult it can be for a survivor -  
7 they might want to talk to a Church person so that I can  
8 express my shame and apology, but they may find it  
9 impossible to get here.

10  
11 Since we last spoke, I've expanded the pastoral care  
12 team in the vicar general's office. We have a senior  
13 adviser, a religious sister with 19 years' experience in  
14 family and social welfare and another 12 years as the  
15 superior of a religious order, who is a very welcoming and  
16 accommodating person.

17  
18 What typically happens is that an engagement goes with  
19 her. She then walks with them to meet with me, with  
20 whoever they may want, but also she continues the  
21 relationship, if that is what people want. So we are  
22 expanding that and we hope that that will meet the very  
23 real suffering and very terrible, terrible evil that has  
24 been perpetrated upon the survivors.

25  
26 MS FURNESS: Just before I come to you,  
27 Archbishop Coleridge, can I ask the four of you, first, has  
28 there been an occasion where you have met with a survivor  
29 on more than one occasion, perhaps starting again with you,  
30 Archbishop Costelloe?

31  
32 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes. Not many. Normally it is  
33 only one meeting. But on two or three occasions, yes,  
34 I have.

35  
36 MS FURNESS: At their initiative?

37  
38 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

39  
40 MS FURNESS: Archbishop Wilson?

41  
42 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Yes, I think on one occasion.

43  
44 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: I would say the same as  
45 Archbishop Costelloe, on a few occasions.

46  
47 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Hart?

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ARCHBISHOP HART: I think on one occasion, with the explanation I gave about the expansion of the pastoral care which does go on now.

MS FURNESS: Have you met people out of the Towards Healing process or redress process?

ARCHBISHOP HART: I follow the behavioural aspects of Towards Healing. We have the Melbourne Response, of course. On occasions when people have asked, yes.

MS FURNESS: But as with your colleagues, overwhelmingly it is through a redress process that you engage with --

ARCHBISHOP HART: That would be right, yes.

MS FURNESS: Archbishop Coleridge?

ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: The same would be true of me, that overwhelmingly my contact with survivors would have been through the Towards Healing process, which is not really a redress process. In my own view, and I think in the view of many, it is intended at least to be a pastoral process. So within that process and at the end of it, there is a meeting which I attend whenever possible. This was not the case when I came to Brisbane, I have to say. At times no official of the archdiocese attended that meeting, or it was someone who was not, shall we say, at the top of the pecking order. But I attend those meetings wherever possible. If I can't be there, if I'm overseas or away, then it would be usually the vicar general or, when dealing with schools, it would be the Director of Catholic Education.

I have also had some, but not many, meetings outside the process of Towards Healing. I'm certainly open to it. I haven't made any public statements to that effect. And I have had a couple of occasions that come to mind where I have met more than once in a less formal setting. There was one when I was in Canberra and there has been one in Brisbane. But that, I have to say, is very unusual.

So I'm open to it as a pastor rather than a bureaucrat, but overwhelmingly my contact with survivors has been within the context of the pastoral process of Towards Healing. In that meeting, obviously I apologise,

1 but, perhaps even more importantly, I listen, and that has  
2 been one of the truly decisive elements of the journey that  
3 I've undertaken through years on this front, to listen to  
4 the story, which is not easy but is absolutely essential.

5  
6 I have also had some contact with a group like  
7 Bravehearts in Brisbane, which is not a Church group but  
8 which does extraordinary work in the area of child  
9 protection. Again, my contact with them has been  
10 instructive.

11  
12 MS FURNESS: Given that it has to be the case that the  
13 survivor wishes to meet with particularly somebody in your  
14 position, and that must be the way the process is  
15 initiated, is it the case that you think that any of you  
16 would benefit from engagement with survivors in such a way  
17 that you hear their voice, as has been told to the  
18 Royal Commission, outside of a process which - I understand  
19 what Archbishop Coleridge is saying - has a pastoral  
20 element but is largely considered to be a redress process?  
21 Has anyone given any thought to that?

22  
23 ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: I would be very open to it if  
24 I thought it would help. So I am open to suggestions. But  
25 sometimes in dealing with abuse, you can, with the best of  
26 intention, do things which hinder rather than help. But if  
27 I thought for a moment that the kind of thing you are  
28 proposing, Ms Furness, was going to help, then I would  
29 certainly consider it and consider it very seriously.

30  
31 MS FURNESS: Does anyone else wish to comment?

32  
33 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I would just comment - I would  
34 agree with that. My experience, and I can only go on my  
35 own experience, but my experience of the meetings with the  
36 survivor at the end of the process - in one sense, they are  
37 quite structured, but in another sense, they are not. The  
38 survivor is really the person who drives the meeting.  
39 I can understand what you are proposing. I think it's  
40 certainly worth considering, but my experience is that  
41 I believe I do hear their voice and hear it very genuinely  
42 within that context of the pastoral meeting of Towards  
43 Healing. There may well be opportunities to do that on  
44 other occasions, but I wouldn't dismiss the value of the  
45 encounter between the survivor and the Church authority, if  
46 it is conducted in a proper way. As long as it is not too  
47 formal, too structured, as long as it is a genuine meeting

1 of people, I think it has a lot of value.

2

3 MS FURNESS: Or indeed too formulaic, archbishop, if  
4 indeed that is the place where each of you most meets  
5 victims, which follows a structure and has probably the  
6 same facilitator there on each occasion, and you perhaps  
7 have the same vicar general or similar person with you, so  
8 that it loses, or may lose, to some extent, its impact?

9

10 ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: That, I have to say, Ms Furness,  
11 has not been my experience. I take the point about it  
12 becoming formulaic, but at times the structure can be in  
13 some ways liberating. My experience of most of these  
14 meetings is that there is something intensely personal. It  
15 depends on individuals, obviously. But I don't think that  
16 a formal structure necessarily inhibits the intensely and  
17 deeply personal character that these meetings are intended  
18 to have.

19

20 I certainly try to make it as informal and as personal  
21 as I can. So whilst there is a risk of the formulaic  
22 approach, I don't think it necessarily needs to work that  
23 way, and in fact, as I say, the formula can at times be  
24 strangely liberating.

25

26 MS FURNESS: Archbishop Hart?

27

28 ARCHBISHOP HART: I have certainly found that the  
29 involvement of the senior adviser, who is a woman, from the  
30 vicar general's office, who has social skills - immediately  
31 the survivor comes and they feel they have someone who is  
32 supporting them as well as being with me, and it takes on  
33 very much, if you will excuse the pun, a heart-to-heart  
34 talk, and good can very much result particularly from that  
35 experience and then from how things go on in the future.

36

37 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Fisher?

38

39 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: I don't know if I gave the impression  
40 that nearly all my meetings have been within Towards  
41 Healing.

42

43 MS FURNESS: No, you didn't.

44

45 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: But I can think offhand immediately of  
46 at least half a dozen that have been quite outside any  
47 redress process, where just a person concerned has

1 expressed a desire to meet me to tell me their story. It  
2 might be that they are looking for an apology. It might be  
3 that they just want me to know what happened. It might be  
4 that they are looking for some help of some kind. But it's  
5 not necessarily part of a formal Towards Healing or civil  
6 litigation or other kind of process. There have been some  
7 of those as well.

8  
9 I think both have proved, in general, to be useful -  
10 certainly useful to me in learning more about this awful  
11 phenomenon, but I think often for the individuals that have  
12 wanted to be heard, it has been helpful too.

13  
14 MS FURNESS: Archbishop Wilson?

15  
16 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Ms Furness, I have been the bishop of  
17 two dioceses and the experiences of dealing with the  
18 problems associated with sexual abuse are very different in  
19 both places.

20  
21 I had the good fortune, when I went to Wollongong and  
22 walked straight into a huge problem in this area, to be  
23 able to work with Kath McCormack, who at that stage was the  
24 head of Catholic Welfare in Wollongong. She and I worked  
25 together to put things together and work out how we were  
26 going to respond and reach out to people, and so on.

27  
28 In that process, she organised with me a meeting that  
29 we held quietly, so that all the victims - all the people  
30 who were survivors were able to come and talk and share  
31 with me. That happened on one Saturday afternoon and  
32 lasted several hours.

33  
34 I was only in Wollongong a short time and was moved  
35 out of there to Adelaide and walked into another  
36 experience, which was very different, in that what I had to  
37 deal with there was not sexual abuse by clergy very much  
38 but a major case involving a bus driver in a school, who  
39 supposedly - because it's very hard to calculate, but was  
40 probably in a position where he would have been able to  
41 abuse 35 children that he had contact with.

42  
43 Responding to that situation, again we held another  
44 public meeting and gathered people together and they spoke  
45 about their concerns, and so on, and we responded to that.

46  
47 But I've not had any contact with other groups who are



1 associated with the survivors of clergy sexual abuse.

2  
3 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Now, in addition to the theme of  
4 listening to the victim being a response which is desired  
5 above and beyond policies, procedures, apologies, and the  
6 like, is showing leadership on an individual basis - that  
7 is, an archbishop or bishop basis - to the diocese. Again,  
8 Archbishop Costelloe, how have you shown leadership above  
9 and beyond the matters we have discussed?

10  
11 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: In relationship to dealing with  
12 survivors or in relationship to the whole issue?

13  
14 MS FURNESS: In relationship to the whole issue.

15  
16 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I've tried to do quite a number of  
17 things. I can briefly explain them, if you wish. I have  
18 issued a number of pastoral letters to the people of the  
19 Catholic community. I have a belief myself, that not  
20 everyone agrees with, that my first responsibility, in  
21 a sense, the only community to which I have a right to  
22 speak, is to the Catholic community. I'm not the leader of  
23 anything else in Western Australia, just the Catholic  
24 Church, so I would normally - in fact, I would say always,  
25 unless it is issuing a general media release - speak to our  
26 own people.

27  
28 So I have tried, on a number of occasions, to express  
29 the deep horror that I feel and I think pretty well every  
30 Catholic in my archdiocese feels about this. I think  
31 people want to see the leader articulate genuinely the  
32 shame of the whole Church, and I've tried to do that.

33  
34 I have done all sorts of things that in some sense  
35 are, in and of themselves, relatively small in relationship  
36 to the way the Professional Standards Office operates, the  
37 way we apply Towards Healing, improving, I think, if I can  
38 put it this way, the fidelity to the protocols of Towards  
39 Healing. I've spent a lot of time and effort trying to  
40 heighten the awareness of our priests about the seriousness  
41 of this matter. I speak to them often about this and write  
42 to them often about this. It's always a part of my  
43 addresses to clergy.

44  
45 I've put some very practical things into place.  
46 I think the main reform that I've instituted is the  
47 safeguarding project in the archdiocese. I've tried to be

1 proactive in making child welfare and child protection the  
2 fundamental concern, the fundamental issue of the  
3 archdiocese at the moment, and I made that decision when  
4 I was appointed as archbishop.

5  
6 MS FURNESS: What challenges do you face working within  
7 the culture and structure of the Catholic Church to show  
8 the leadership you believe is necessary to those who have  
9 survived child sexual abuse and want to know that you are  
10 stopping it happening again in your diocese?

11  
12 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: What challenges do I face?

13  
14 MS FURNESS: Yes.

15  
16 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: If I could answer in a negative way  
17 in one sense: I haven't encountered major resistance to  
18 anything that I've tried to do. So I don't face the  
19 challenge of a group of priests, for example, who are  
20 resistant to what I'm trying to do or angry about what I'm  
21 trying to do. I would say that my impression is to the  
22 contrary, that I think that people are very grateful that  
23 there are initiatives being developed, there are new things  
24 being done, and so I don't find any opposition in that  
25 sense, or any challenge.

26  
27 I think one of the big challenges for all of us,  
28 I suspect, around the country as far as the Catholic Church  
29 is concerned, is to avoid any hint that we're now on top of  
30 this issue and we can say, "Okay, we ticked that box", and  
31 we move on. So keeping it at the forefront of people's  
32 minds I think is a challenge.

33  
34 THE CHAIR: Archbishop, you and the others, your  
35 colleagues, accepted from Ms Furness that sexual abuse of  
36 children in the Church reflects a failure in leadership.

37  
38 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

39  
40 THE CHAIR: You all accepted that.

41  
42 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes, yes.

43  
44 THE CHAIR: What have you done, firstly,  
45 Archbishop Costelloe, to review the leadership within the  
46 Church, or in your diocese, to be able to say to the people  
47 gathered here and listening elsewhere, "I have started to,

1 or indeed I do, understand why the leadership failed"?  
2 What have you done in that space?

3  
4 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: In terms of "started to", I think  
5 one of the things that I have done - and this is, in  
6 a sense, an overall concept - we've just concluded a very  
7 extensive consultation process about the whole life of the  
8 archdiocese, the needs of the archdiocese, the future of  
9 the archdiocese, and I won't go into all of the details,  
10 but that process of consultation led to eventually  
11 formulation of a plan for the next five years, which has  
12 many elements in it. I identified professional standards  
13 and dealing with the crisis of child sexual abuse as the  
14 number one priority.

15  
16 I've done a number of things in terms of improving,  
17 I think, the capacity of the archdiocese to respond. When  
18 I took over as the archbishop, the director of professional  
19 standards was only part time, and I increased that to  
20 a full-time position, provided extra administrative support  
21 as well, and then we've had other people join that staff.  
22 These are kind of concrete steps that I've taken to --

23  
24 THE CHAIR: They are all steps that respond to the problem  
25 that exists.

26  
27 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

28  
29 THE CHAIR: But the problem emerged, as I understand you  
30 to be agreeing, from a failure of leadership within the  
31 Church.

32  
33 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

34  
35 THE CHAIR: It is one thing to deal with the illness once  
36 the symptoms have emerged, but unless you address the  
37 leadership failure and understand why it happened, you  
38 won't deal with the problem, will you?

39  
40 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Well, the problem will always be  
41 potentially there to arise again unless that issue is dealt  
42 with. That's certainly true.

43  
44 THE CHAIR: Well, then, can I press you again: what have  
45 you done to examine the failure of leadership, which you  
46 accept is at the root of this problem?

47

1 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I'm not sure if this is what you  
2 are asking me, but I would say, for example, that I have  
3 adopted a style of leadership that is, I hope, more  
4 consultative than has been the case in the past. Now, it's  
5 limited consultation, but it's a much broader consultation.  
6 So I think I could genuinely say that there would not be  
7 a significant decision that I have taken in the archdiocese  
8 that I have taken without consultation.  
9

10 I think that is a response to what tended to be an  
11 issue in the past, where the bishop was perhaps regarded as  
12 almost like a little monarch in his own diocese and could  
13 make whatever decisions he wanted, irrespective of what  
14 advice he might seek or not seek. I've changed that,  
15 I think, quite deliberately and quite significantly.  
16

17 That touches, I think, one of the issues that has come  
18 up often in the Royal Commission under the broad heading of  
19 culture, and I've tried to change the culture so that the  
20 archdiocese understands that there is a consultative  
21 approach to decision-making. I'm not sure if that's what  
22 you are asking, but that's one response.  
23

24 THE CHAIR: It may be part of the issue. Would any other  
25 of you archbishops like to grapple with this issue?  
26 I rather thought, Archbishop Costelloe, what you might say  
27 to me is that the Bishops Conference is working in this  
28 space, but --  
29

30 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I am sorry, I thought you meant  
31 just in the Archdiocese of Perth.  
32

33 THE CHAIR: And generally.  
34

35 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Okay.  
36

37 THE CHAIR: Can anyone else help me?  
38

39 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Your Honour, I would like to talk  
40 about that. It seems to me that in the issues about  
41 leadership, there is a very big responsibility on the  
42 shoulders of we who are the leaders now in coming in and  
43 looking at what has happened in the past. It's a big  
44 responsibility for us to make sure that everything is  
45 changed and made to work properly.  
46

47 We have responsibility, as you say, not only in our

1 own dioceses but throughout our whole country. We have  
2 a big responsibility through the Bishops Conference. The  
3 formulation at the beginning of the National Committee for  
4 Professional Standards, which was a decision taken by the  
5 bishops and religious, was meant to be, and I believe has  
6 been, a major change in the area of leadership. That  
7 organisation has worked really hard and with great insight  
8 to change the culture and the fact of our behaviour. So  
9 a lot of developments have occurred that way.

10  
11 The other point is that as we have been moving ahead  
12 through all this, too, we've established working  
13 relationships with people involved in this area in other  
14 countries and at the Holy See, trying to work out ways  
15 where we would be able to work well in dealing with the  
16 issues that we face in this area.

17  
18 When I became a bishop and was confronted by this, in  
19 my analysis I thought that in order to show leadership,  
20 there were four areas where we needed to make some change  
21 or take some new initiatives.

22  
23 The first was to reach out to the people who are the  
24 survivors and their families. The second was to deal  
25 effectively with the perpetrators, which involved, then,  
26 making sure that we fulfilled our obligations according to  
27 the law. The third was to work really hard to make sure  
28 that we did all that we could in selection and formation so  
29 that paedophiles wouldn't appear in the clergy and be able  
30 to do the terrible things that they did.

31  
32 The fourth was to establish a safeguarding program for  
33 our children so that the whole community of the Catholic  
34 Church would be really aware of all the values that need to  
35 be put into place to protect children and give them the  
36 opportunity to develop and grow in a way that they can be  
37 free and make responses to people and understand that they  
38 need to be treated with respect and kindness.

39  
40 So I think that, in terms of leadership, we have been  
41 working and trying to put all those elements into place.  
42 What began in 1996, through the development of the  
43 committee, the establishment of Towards Healing and so on,  
44 has developed and grown since. It wasn't perfect then and  
45 it's not perfect now. We have new initiatives to take now  
46 that have been discussed before the Commission, and they  
47 are another step on the road of trying to change this and

1 to establish a new pattern of leadership.

2  
3 ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: Episcopal leadership is exercised  
4 really at three levels - local, national and international.  
5 The mix varies from bishop to bishop, but the formula is  
6 the same. At each of those three levels, episcopal  
7 leadership has been changing and is going to change  
8 further. Episcopal governance is a kind of non-negotiable  
9 in the Catholic Church, but it can take so many different  
10 forms, and has historically.

11  
12 Now, if you take the Bishops Conference, which works  
13 nationally, it can't tell bishops what to do, but it can  
14 exercise a subtle but powerful form of social pressure or  
15 peer group pressure, and there has been from within the  
16 conference a very strong desire expressed by the bishops to  
17 move from an administrative modus operandi to a pastoral  
18 modus operandi, and that's the shift that is taking place.  
19 Now, as we become a more genuinely pastoral body, the kind  
20 of leadership of which you speak becomes more possible.

21  
22 Similarly, too, the relationship between, say, the  
23 Holy See and the local Churches is changing, and I think  
24 Baroness Hollins spoke of that this morning. So it is at  
25 each of those three levels that shifts are happening. But  
26 if one word sums up the shifts happening at each of the  
27 three levels, I think it would have to be "collaborative".  
28 We are learning to collaborate in new ways, not only  
29 bishops collaborating with each other, but within their  
30 dioceses, as Archbishop Costelloe has said, collaborating  
31 in all kinds of ways, which, in the not-too-distant past,  
32 were unthinkable, but also working more collaboratively  
33 with the Holy See, particularly in this area of abuse.

34  
35 It seems to me that if we are genuinely going to  
36 provide leadership in this area of abuse, it goes to the  
37 heart of what it means for bishops to be leaders in the  
38 Church across the board. In other words, this is not an  
39 isolated area. The kinds of failures of leadership and the  
40 requirements of leadership now that have been identified go  
41 to the very heart of what the Church is and does.

42  
43 That's why, in many ways, this Royal Commission,  
44 I think, particularly in this final hearing, has served  
45 mightily to generate what I would take to be the agenda of  
46 the plenary council of which I've spoken, where we will  
47 have to make big decisions about the future of the Catholic

1 Church of this country, including the shape of episcopal  
2 leadership, which is very much on the table, because it has  
3 been on the table so evidently here.

4  
5 THE CHAIR: Would either of the other two of you wish to  
6 say something?

7  
8 ARCHBISHOP HART: Certainly, your Honour, I would echo  
9 what Archbishop Coleridge is saying. I've been a bishop  
10 nearly 20 years. What is very evident in the Bishops  
11 Conference is the desire to look at issues with people, to  
12 look at the feelings of people, the problems of people and  
13 how we can walk with them. It's much more collaborative.  
14 It's much more engaged with the challenges that we have in  
15 our society - and they may be moral; they may be family;  
16 they may be societal - but also to look at what we can do  
17 as a Church to engage with those needs and to do so in  
18 a way which builds up and encourages people.

19  
20 THE CHAIR: Archbishop Fisher?

21  
22 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Yes. I think there are lots of ways.  
23 I've tried to think how I can be a better leader or how  
24 those working with me as leaders can be better. What can  
25 we learn from what has gone wrong? So I would think, like  
26 Archbishop Costelloe, certainly my style of leadership  
27 would be much more consultative than might have been in the  
28 old model of the monarchical bishop. I would always have  
29 a group of people working with me before I made any  
30 significant decisions.

31  
32 I think I involve a lot more external review. When  
33 I first came into each of my dioceses, I had people come  
34 from outside and look at our performance in this area and  
35 how it could be improved and look at our structures and  
36 review our cases, and so on. I want to take into account  
37 other perspectives from people who are not part of my  
38 bureaucracy already or not employed by me necessarily.

39  
40 I try also to lead by example. So if I'm saying to my  
41 priests, "You all have to have education in this area, know  
42 the protocols, have training in professional standards and  
43 professional integrity", I have to submit to that myself.  
44 If I ask them to all have regular appraisal of their  
45 performance as leaders, I have to submit to that myself.  
46 So the group of Sydney bishops has just recently agreed  
47 that just as we are going to be asking our clergy to have

1 regular appraisal, we will also go through that process of  
2 external people commenting on our performance.

3  
4 I think in those ways, I'm trying proactively to learn  
5 both from what has been done well in the past but also from  
6 what has been revealed to have gone wrong and try to be  
7 leading differently, and I ask the same of the people that  
8 lead with me.

9  
10 THE CHAIR: That opens up some of the issues in the  
11 territory, but I'm sure Ms Furness is going to pursue  
12 a number of questions with you.

13  
14 MS FURNESS: Turning to what went wrong, from the  
15 discussion you have just had, it's clear that each of you  
16 is of the view that the leadership failed monumentally in  
17 the past. You have spoken, each of you, as to how your  
18 leadership, you believe, differs from the leadership in the  
19 past.

20  
21 Perhaps again with you, Archbishop Costelloe, we can  
22 start with what was it about the leadership in the past  
23 that was a causal factor in not only the appalling abuse  
24 that occurred but the appalling response to that abuse?

25  
26 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I think there are probably many  
27 ways of approaching that question. I think one of the ways  
28 I would express it would be to borrow a phrase that  
29 Archbishop Coleridge, I think, used earlier on in this  
30 Commission hearing, and this is a cultural question: the  
31 Church, in a sense, saw itself largely as - I think the  
32 phrase the archbishop used was a law unto itself, that it  
33 was somehow or other so special and so unique and, in  
34 a sense, so important that it stood aside from the normal  
35 things that would be a part of any other body that works or  
36 exists in a society.

37  
38 So I think there was a profound cultural - I'm not  
39 sure what the word is - not instinct, exactly, but  
40 a profound cultural presupposition, perhaps, about the  
41 uniqueness of the Church and the specialness of the church,  
42 in a sense the untouchability of the Church, that it didn't  
43 have to answer to anybody else; it only had to answer to  
44 itself.

45  
46 I think if you look at that at the global level of the  
47 church, you can then take it down and say, well, that's



1 probably going to be the way many bishops in their own  
2 dioceses might also think of themselves, as a law unto  
3 themselves and not having to be answerable to anybody, not  
4 having to consult with anybody but just to make decisions,  
5 in a sense, out of their own wisdom, without consulting the  
6 wisdom of anybody else. I think that can then trickle down  
7 to the priest in the parish. I would see that as one of  
8 the major causes of this inability to deal with this  
9 terrible crisis, and in that sense I would see it as  
10 a fundamental cultural issue.

11

12 MS FURNESS: Given your explanation, it seems, then, that  
13 the change will only come about due to the individual  
14 characteristics of a bishop?

15

16 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: No, no, I think it's more than just  
17 the individual characteristics of a bishop. I think there  
18 was a way of understanding the Church, which each bishop  
19 may well have bought into, but it was permeating the whole  
20 culture of the Church. So just changing the individual  
21 bishops' approach, important though that will be, needs to  
22 be informed by a reimagining of what the Church is really  
23 supposed to be all about, how the Church relates to the  
24 wider world in which it lives.

25

26 MS FURNESS: But the bishop could stand outside of that  
27 reimagining and say, "No, I prefer the old way", and  
28 there's nothing to stop him doing that?

29

30 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I'm not sure that there's nothing  
31 to stop him. I think the very experience that we're going  
32 through at the moment is a powerful impetus to the Church  
33 generally and then to individual bishops within the Church  
34 to realise that we can't continue to live with the kinds of  
35 presuppositions we had in the past. So I don't think  
36 it's - I wouldn't agree that it's easy, let me put it that  
37 way, for a bishop to stand out of this. It's possible,  
38 yes.

39

40 MS FURNESS: Bishops in the past did stand outside that.  
41 We know that there were some bishops who operated in  
42 dioceses well.

43

44 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

45

46 MS FURNESS: And we know there are some bishops who  
47 operated appallingly in dioceses and let dreadful things

1           happen.

2

3           ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE:   Yes.

4

5           MS FURNESS:   And they were working within the same  
6           culture, broadly speaking?

7

8           ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE:   I'm not able to explain why some  
9           bishops, if I can put it this way, why some bishops seemed  
10          to get it and other bishops didn't seem to get it. But  
11          I think it perhaps leads to the question or the comment  
12          about the power of that cultural presupposition about the  
13          uniqueness of the Church and, as I said before, the  
14          untouchability of the Church.

15

16                         Now, not every bishop would have operated that way.  
17          Not every bishop would have seen it that way. But for  
18          those who did, it had catastrophic consequences.

19

20          MS FURNESS:   How do you bring with you those that did in  
21          the past or those now that have a similar view, albeit one  
22          not expressed as loudly as they might have in the past?

23

24          ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE:   I think that the growing influence  
25          of the Conference of Bishops is one opportunity. I've only  
26          been a bishop for 10 years - that's a fairly long time, but  
27          in the scheme of things perhaps not so much. My experience  
28          of the Bishops Conference is that all of these kinds of  
29          issues are on the table; they are discussed; people speak  
30          very frankly about many of these issues.

31

32                         As Archbishop Coleridge said, there's nothing that  
33          I, as the Archbishop of Perth, can do to determine how the  
34          Archbishop of Brisbane operates within his own diocese.  
35          But the culture has changed. The understanding has  
36          changed. I think that the face of the Church in Australia,  
37          anyway, in 2017 is vastly different to the face of the  
38          Church - I'm presuming this because I wasn't there at the  
39          time - say in the 1950s. I'm sure that the face of the  
40          Church is very different now.

41

42                         So I think the likelihood of the contemporary Church  
43          throwing up an aggressively monarchical kind of bishop, if  
44          I can use that expression, is very low now.

45

46          MS FURNESS:   Archbishop Hart, you are probably the  
47          longest-standing bishop on the panel; is that right?

1  
2 ARCHBISHOP HART: On this panel, yes - no, no,  
3 Archbishop Wilson is.  
4  
5 MS FURNESS: I'm sorry, Archbishop Wilson.  
6  
7 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: I'm the oldest, thank you.  
8  
9 MS FURNESS: As the oldest archbishop --  
10  
11 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: The longest, yes.  
12  
13 MS FURNESS: -- you have experienced the change that  
14 Archbishop Costelloe has spoken of, and no doubt you knew  
15 well some of the bishops we were referring to as those who  
16 did well or did less well. What can you help us with about  
17 there being a change and how the change has been effected?  
18  
19 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Ms Furness, I believe this is  
20 a multifaceted thing that needs to be considered in many  
21 different ways.  
22  
23 One of the big challenges for us is theological, in  
24 that over the last 100 years there has been a huge shift in  
25 the way the Church thinks about itself, which was expressed  
26 very clearly in the Second Vatican Council. That then  
27 takes some time to permeate through the life of the Church.  
28  
29 It's partially there now, because in 1983 a new Code  
30 of Canon Law was given to the Church, which guides bishops  
31 and everybody else in what they are supposed to do. That  
32 Code of Canon Law is shot through with the vision of the  
33 Church that comes from the Second Vatican Council.  
34 Elements like the role of laypeople, the role of women, and  
35 so on, all are part of that change.  
36  
37 I also think that part of the difficulty that we've  
38 had in responding to this crisis about sexual abuse was  
39 simply based on the fact that people just didn't know and  
40 understand what they were dealing with. I don't think they  
41 really understood the nature of sexual abuse of children  
42 and the effect that it had on the children.  
43  
44 MS FURNESS: It was a crime, archbishop.  
45  
46 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Yes, that's right. But, I mean, they  
47 didn't - I'm just saying, though, on the level of

1 appreciating the reality of it, they didn't know that.  
2 I understand it was a crime.

3  
4 And then the other element would be that I think that  
5 we have big cultural changes around us in the society that  
6 we live in that have already had and will continue to have  
7 an effect on the way that we experience ourselves as  
8 a Church. One of the big shifts has been that when you use  
9 the word "Church", often people would just believe they are  
10 referring to bishops and priests, whereas the word "Church"  
11 means everybody.

12  
13 MS FURNESS: But just coming back to your proposition that  
14 no-one really knew what was happening and what it all  
15 meant, the Church, since at least the 4th century, has been  
16 regulating the conduct of priests and religious in relation  
17 to small children on the grounds that it was, at the very  
18 least, misconduct and, at the worst, the most serious  
19 crime.

20  
21 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: That's right.

22  
23 MS FURNESS: How can it be, then, that after centuries of  
24 that knowledge, it appears that in the 1960s, 1970s and  
25 1980s they didn't know what they were dealing with?

26  
27 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: I just think that's ignorance. People  
28 lost their knowledge and were unable to reflect on the  
29 experience of the Church in regard to this matter.

30  
31 MS FURNESS: Archbishop Hart?

32  
33 ARCHBISHOP HART: I would certainly say that while there  
34 were things that happened in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, it  
35 was always wrong, but the bishops seemed to be in a strange  
36 way - you know, "We're different", and they just didn't  
37 drill down to the reality. There was an unreality of the  
38 way in which bishops operated and they just sort of floated  
39 above it, and it just didn't - you know, the awful reality  
40 of these crimes didn't make contact with them.

41  
42 I don't understand why, but I do know that the way we  
43 act now is very, very different, the way we consult, the  
44 way we consult with people in various areas and relate to  
45 the people who - very little comes up to me that hasn't  
46 been reflected on by a group, the people in social welfare  
47 or in evangelisation or whatever. Now, that's not an

1 excuse, but it's an explanation of how things have changed.  
2  
3 THE CHAIR: Can I just say to everyone in the audience  
4 that it's very important that we hear from the archbishops  
5 and that they have an opportunity to answer Ms Furness' and  
6 the Commissioners' questions. I would be grateful if you  
7 would keep any comments out of the hearing so that that  
8 opportunity is properly provided. Thank you.  
9  
10 MS FURNESS: In the case of embezzlement, archbishop,  
11 which is a crime, in the 1960s or 1970s if somebody -  
12 a priest - embezzled the diocese for a significant amount  
13 of money, that's a crime, is it not?  
14  
15 ARCHBISHOP HART: That's a crime.  
16  
17 MS FURNESS: The diocese, I suggest, wouldn't have any  
18 hesitation in dealing with the person who embezzled the  
19 money as though he had committed a crime?  
20  
21 ARCHBISHOP HART: Correct.  
22  
23 MS FURNESS: Leaving aside the civil authorities for the  
24 moment, they would deal with it professionally?  
25  
26 ARCHBISHOP HART: Certainly.  
27  
28 MS FURNESS: Why is child sexual abuse different?  
29  
30 ARCHBISHOP HART: I think it might have been the thing  
31 that wasn't spoken about. You know, it was so far out of  
32 their consciousness.  
33  
34 Your Honour, I've given evidence before about people  
35 in my situation who just couldn't believe that a priest  
36 would do these terrible crimes. I'm not one of them. And  
37 I think that illustrates the mindset. It doesn't excuse  
38 it, but it illustrates what the mindset was, that it was  
39 just out there and it was left out there. That's a serious  
40 failure of responsibility.  
41  
42 MS FURNESS: But isn't it the same with fraud, that if the  
43 priest was in the idealised state that we've spoken about,  
44 and unique and perfect and above others, you couldn't  
45 believe that he would steal money, but you accepted it?  
46  
47 ARCHBISHOP HART: I like your question and your analogy.

1 I think, really, that sort of shows the mental divide that  
2 might have been there. I don't approve of it.

3  
4 MS FURNESS: Archbishop Fisher?

5  
6 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: I think there was, as  
7 Archbishop Wilson said, a tremendous ignorance of the  
8 prevalence in the community, in families, in the Church, of  
9 this terrible evil. People knew of individual cases of it.  
10 I don't think they understood its prevalence. They  
11 certainly didn't understand the terrible damage it did or  
12 the fact that there was, it would seem to us now, very  
13 little you can do to cure it, as it were, in a perpetrator.  
14 People thought that there were things you could do,  
15 spiritual exercises or a quick course of psychotherapy, or  
16 something. So I think ignorance was a factor.

17  
18 I think there was a lack of empathy, too, often.  
19 People didn't - it is not just that they didn't understand  
20 intellectually; they didn't feel the pain that was being  
21 caused and the long-term pain. And part of both of those  
22 was a self-protectiveness on the part of the institution,  
23 that you didn't want scandal, you didn't want causes for  
24 people to think less of the clergy or the bishops or  
25 religious, of the institution. And so you might say things  
26 were staring us in the face, but it seemed to me people  
27 wouldn't see it because they just wanted to protect the  
28 name or the institution very often.

29  
30 MS FURNESS: But, archbishop, it seems inconsistent to on  
31 the one hand say that the Church and the leaders of the  
32 Church were ignorant of it - ignorant of the consequences.  
33 If that's the case, why was so much effort put in to  
34 covering it up and being secret about it, if it was not  
35 something that was known and understood?

36  
37 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: When I talk about the ignorance of its  
38 prevalence and its damage, I think that this was  
39 commonplace. I think kids went and told their parents and  
40 were told to stop such talk, sometimes; they told their  
41 teachers and they were told, "How dare you talk about  
42 father that way." It wasn't just bishops behaving this  
43 way. I think probably the leadership class generally in  
44 Australia was very protective of its own. And add the  
45 clericalist culture and the self-protectiveness of the  
46 institution, it magnified this terribly.

1           So it's not just one little bit of this puzzle, you  
2 have to put it all together. But I think when I say there  
3 is ignorance, I don't mean that people didn't know it was  
4 evil, that it was a terrible sin and a crime - they knew  
5 that full well and that's part of, as you say, why they  
6 covered it up when it happened. But I think they didn't  
7 appreciate the long-term damage this was doing to people,  
8 the repetitiveness of it, the almost addictiveness of it in  
9 some of the perpetrators; the fact that there is no way to  
10 manage that by moving someone somewhere else - that you  
11 have to completely contain them, possibly for the rest of  
12 their life. I think people didn't understand that and  
13 maybe we still don't fully understand the phenomenon of  
14 paedophilia.

15  
16           Maybe future generations will look back at us, in  
17 2016, the way we look back at people from the 1950s, and  
18 think: how primitive they were in their understandings or  
19 in their responses. But I think we certainly understand  
20 better now, and I really believe empathise better now, than  
21 what often seems to have happened in the past.

22  
23 MS FURNESS: You would be familiar with Dr Marie Keenan's  
24 work?

25  
26 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Yes.

27  
28 MS FURNESS: She described that the offenders within the  
29 Church were there and had the characteristics that were  
30 unique to the Catholic Church in the way in which the  
31 Catholic Church operated - you will be familiar with what  
32 I'm saying?

33  
34 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Mmm-hmm.

35  
36 MS FURNESS: If that's the case, then what was happening  
37 in the rest of society, albeit with familial or dealing  
38 with Church-related matters but outside of the structure of  
39 the Church, seems to have less effect.

40  
41 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Well, I think if we want to understand  
42 the problem, we have to understand the whole context and  
43 understand, for instance, how prevalent this was in the  
44 whole community and in other institutions. We've got some  
45 insight into that through this Royal Commission and through  
46 other people's studies, such as Dr Keenan's.

47

1 But there is no doubt you have both a perennial  
2 problem in communities, that perhaps was better or worse at  
3 particular times in Australia, and those factors specific  
4 to particular institutions, and we're focusing here on the  
5 Catholic Church. And there were some real ones. I think  
6 you have the intersection of these three powerful things of  
7 sex, power and religion here, that coincided in a very  
8 destructive direction, particularly in the 1950s, 1960s and  
9 1970s, that we've seen such a terrible tsunami, as you  
10 described it earlier.

11  
12 I think there is a broader social context, there is  
13 a longer history - you have taken us back to the third or  
14 fourth century. But there is also something that was  
15 particularly awful at a particular time that has led to the  
16 demand for a thorough investigation.

17  
18 THE CHAIR: Archbishop, you speak of the 1950s, 1960s and  
19 1970s. Given that we know it has been happening for  
20 centuries, many of those who might have been abused in the  
21 1920s, 1930s and 1940s will of course have passed on long  
22 before the issue rose to the public domain, which of course  
23 it ultimately did. And, as you know, once out in the  
24 public domain, many more people have come forward. I mean,  
25 thousands have come to this Commission, many of whom had  
26 never been to anyone else before.

27  
28 So I'm not sure that it's appropriate to see it just  
29 as a phenomenon that was happening in the 1950s, 1960s and  
30 1970s. And if you look at it in that way you may be  
31 missing the real issues that lie behind this.

32  
33 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Yes. Thank you, your Honour. Look,  
34 I'm not wanting to say for a moment it had never happened  
35 before and it hasn't happened since. There's some reason  
36 to think there was a spike in this period - some reason to  
37 think. But, as you say, people weren't as free to speak of  
38 it in the past and, since then, it may be some people are  
39 still not ready to speak of it but may in the future. So  
40 we may discover there's more in the 1980s and 1990s than we  
41 realise.

42  
43 THE CHAIR: We know that it takes men maybe 30 years to  
44 come forward.

45  
46 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Yes. So, we would expect, if the  
47 rates were similar, that at least the 1980s would be



1 showing by now, because we're 30 years on from then, and  
2 they are not. So it does seem there was a spike, but  
3 that's not to diminish.

4  
5 I mean, one act of this is infinitely too many at any  
6 time in history - today or any time. But if we're trying  
7 to get to what were the factors that led to a particular  
8 problem in a particular institution, then we're looking for  
9 what was happening then and there, and I think there were  
10 some very particular things happening then and there.

11  
12 It was a time in history when the Catholic Church was  
13 doing a lot of the heavy lifting with children -  
14 orphanages, schools for poor kids, boys' groups, whatever.  
15 Some of that I think was actually very good work. It was  
16 a very important contribution to this nation. But it also  
17 created opportunities for some terrible predatory  
18 behaviour.

19  
20 It was a period of a huge rise of vocations, huge  
21 numbers coming in to the priesthood and religious life, and  
22 it would seem very little serious selection going on; it  
23 was like all comers.

24  
25 It was a period of big change happening in the Church  
26 and in the broader culture, and some disorientation.

27  
28 So I think you have a number of things happening in  
29 this period that might explain the spike, if there is  
30 a spike. But I take your point we don't fully know that  
31 because we don't have all the data of history.

32  
33 THE CHAIR: We will never know.

34  
35 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: And may never know.

36  
37 MS FURNESS: You referred to the intersection of sex,  
38 power and I think it was theology? What was the third?

39  
40 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Sex, power and religion. The sort of  
41 three topics you don't discuss at the dinner table.

42  
43 MS FURNESS: It depends upon your dinner table I suspect,  
44 archbishop. Those three matters are not dissimilar from  
45 Dr Ranson's theory. Certainly he used slightly different  
46 language, but that was the effect of it. Is it the case  
47 that your reference to power is effectively a reference to

1 clericalism?

2

3 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: That's part of it. I think part of it  
4 is about violence. I think we have come to understand it  
5 is too simple to call this just sex. It is often about  
6 violence, about the abuse of power and authority. So there  
7 were other things going on in these crimes and there were  
8 other things going on in why this was facilitated,  
9 permitted, overlooked, covered up, and so on, to do with  
10 power.

11

12 MS FURNESS: So what has changed, in relation to your  
13 trilogy of sex, power and theology, from then to now in the  
14 Church?

15

16 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: I think our understandings of all  
17 three have changed quite dramatically. I think lots of  
18 people would say they still need more change or that we  
19 have hardly begun to digest some of, say, what the Vatican  
20 Council said to us about authority as service, leadership  
21 as service not as an elitist class who are above  
22 accountability, transparency. But some of that certainly  
23 has changed in my lifetime, in my experience.

24

25 Attitudes to sex - I think you have heard from some  
26 previous witnesses that there was a time when it was  
27 unspeakable, it was just sort of seen as shameful. I think  
28 it's much more out in the open, people talk about it more,  
29 talk about its abuses as well as its proper place in  
30 intimate relationships.

31

32 And also with respect to religion. I think people now  
33 will be much more ready to critique, to not see it as  
34 a taboo area where they mustn't have anything to say.

35

36 In terms of your earlier questions, how am I convinced  
37 I can't be an absolute monarch the way some others might  
38 have been? Well, for one thing, people won't let me.  
39 People just won't have it. They might have once. Today,  
40 my priests and my people, if I start behaving tyrannically,  
41 one way or another they will vote with their feet, they  
42 will vote with their voices, they will go to the media,  
43 they will be sending me petitions. I will know that they  
44 are dissatisfied. That might not have happened at some  
45 times in the past, where people had an idealised view of  
46 bishops or people in authority and they didn't complain.

47

1 Today, we're under much more scrutiny from the general  
2 public. Our own people are much more likely to say their  
3 say. And I do believe in general we are wanting to hear  
4 them. It is painful sometimes to hear it, but I think most  
5 of us want to hear it now.

6  
7 MS FURNESS: Archbishop Costelloe, as you would be aware,  
8 there has been much discussion of governance and the way in  
9 which governance may have contributed to not only the fact  
10 of abuse but the response to abuse.

11  
12 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Mmm-hmm.

13  
14 MS FURNESS: Do you have any thoughts on that that you  
15 want to share with us?

16  
17 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: I would suggest that the kinds of  
18 things that we have just been talking about in relationship  
19 to the ways in which bishops now hopefully are exercising  
20 the rightful authority that they have is very different to  
21 in the past.

22  
23 So along with Archbishop Fisher, I would say - it's  
24 not my style, anyway, but if I were to try and be very  
25 autocratic and just make demands and not give any  
26 explanations or not try and bring people with me to  
27 consider my points of view or my suggestions, I would just  
28 lose cooperation and I wouldn't be able to function. So  
29 I think there is a very different way of being a bishop  
30 now.

31  
32 In terms of governance, I think Archbishop Coleridge  
33 has mentioned that the way our church is structured there  
34 are certain things that are, if you like, fixed in stone,  
35 that we, certainly the Australian Bishops, are not able to  
36 change structurally, from that point of view - so the  
37 structures of governance.

38  
39 The ways of working within those structures I think  
40 have changed dramatically and can continue to change.

41  
42 One of the problems in the past - and I go back really  
43 to what I was saying before - is that there was this very  
44 deeply developed concept that we are immune from criticism;  
45 we shouldn't be scrutinised; we are a law unto ourselves  
46 and, as I said before, if that's a general feeling in the  
47 air of the Church, it will express itself possibly in the

1 way bishops operate, in the way priests operate in their  
2 parishes or religious operate in their institutions.

3  
4 So I think it's a question of the way in which the  
5 structures of governance are exercised, if I can put it  
6 that way.

7  
8 MS FURNESS: You would accept that at least one of the  
9 principles of good governance is transparency?

10  
11 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

12  
13 MS FURNESS: And one of the issues in the past was  
14 a significant degree of secrecy.

15  
16 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

17  
18 MS FURNESS: How is the Church now, through the area you  
19 work in as Archbishop of Perth, more transparent?

20  
21 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Well, I'm not sure that we're  
22 hiding anything, so I'm --

23  
24 MS FURNESS: How do we know you're not hiding anything?

25  
26 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Well, you are welcome to come and  
27 investigate.

28  
29 MS FURNESS: Not an uncommon way of being transparent is  
30 producing documents that tell parishioners and the public  
31 generally what you are doing.

32  
33 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes.

34  
35 MS FURNESS: I don't know that the archdiocese has an  
36 annual report, does it?

37  
38 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: No, we don't.

39  
40 MS FURNESS: That might be one way of being more  
41 transparent?

42  
43 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes, certainly, yes.

44  
45 MS FURNESS: Another might be publishing statistics in  
46 relation to professional standards so the public know what  
47 the numbers are, what you are doing with these people, what

1 the outcomes are.  
2  
3 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes, yes. And we haven't published  
4 those statistics so far.  
5  
6 MS FURNESS: Another aspect of good governance that is  
7 generally considered is having a diverse mix of skills and  
8 experience on boards and other committees that assist in  
9 governance.  
10  
11 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: Yes, yes.  
12  
13 MS FURNESS: The church is not quite there yet, is it?  
14  
15 ARCHBISHOP COSTELLOE: No, it probably has a fair way to  
16 go, but I think it has made a good start. I would say that  
17 in my archdiocese, but I think probably in most  
18 jurisdictions of the Church, we have boards and we have  
19 boards of management, boards of governance, nearly always  
20 comprising laypeople - laywomen and laymen.  
21  
22 I think one of the things that is important for me,  
23 anyway, is to say that the Church that I experience now is  
24 different from the Church that I experienced when I was  
25 a boy growing up, and that was in the 1960s and 1970s.  
26  
27 I struggle a little bit, because I don't recognise in  
28 the Church of today some of the elements which are being  
29 identified as major contributors to this. Some I do, but  
30 not all of them, and this is one of them.  
31  
32 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Archbishop Wilson, you may have  
33 heard that your archdiocese received some praise from  
34 Professor Ormerod a week or so ago.  
35  
36 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: I have heard that.  
37  
38 MS FURNESS: That was partly in the context of the data  
39 that was released, which indicated that your archdiocese  
40 had a rate or proportion that was significantly below the  
41 average. You are aware of that?  
42  
43 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: I am aware of that.  
44  
45 MS FURNESS: Professor Ormerod gave a reason being that  
46 you and your predecessor had put in place structures where  
47 there were groups of laypeople who were your advisers, and

1 to some extent you had engaged with them in the governance  
2 of the archdiocese.

3  
4 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: That's right. In the history of the  
5 Archdiocese of Adelaide there has been a long, long period  
6 of involvement of laypeople in the life of the Church.  
7 After the Second World War our diocese was very heavily  
8 influenced by what was called the Cardijn method of youth  
9 and looking after students.

10  
11 So a large number of our people, who then were young  
12 adults and teenagers, were involved in the life of the  
13 Church through the YCW movement and YCS movement. Those  
14 people then went on to take up leadership positions in  
15 their parishes and so on.

16  
17 At the same time, Archbishop Beovich, who was the  
18 archbishop from 1939, came home from the Second Vatican  
19 Council in 1965 and immediately began to create these new  
20 bodies that allowed people to participate in governance.

21  
22 So the diocesan pastoral council began then and has  
23 continued on, albeit with a few changes.

24  
25 Then Archbishop Faulkner developed a leadership team  
26 at the top of the archdiocese that involved women working  
27 alongside him. When I became the archbishop, I then  
28 transformed that a little so that it would become canonical  
29 and operate within the system of canon law.

30  
31 So around the table, at the leadership of the diocese,  
32 there are women who have heavy responsibilities and lots of  
33 delegated authority from me to do the work of the Church.

34  
35 MS FURNESS: Were there any rumblings from parish priests,  
36 and the like, seeing women in positions of power that  
37 perhaps were refused them?

38  
39 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Not in my time. There could very well  
40 have been before I arrived. But no, not in my time.  
41 I think that, as I said, our diocese was very heavily  
42 influenced by the fact that so many people were involved in  
43 this YCW movement, that it led people to see that, as  
44 a result of their baptism, they had a role to play in the  
45 life of the Church. So it was regarded as natural that  
46 they would take up that kind of work in leadership.

47

1 MS FURNESS: When you refer to changing it to make it  
2 canonical, what do you mean?

3  
4 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Well, the arrangements before I went  
5 there were a sort of private arrangement made by  
6 Archbishop Faulkner, and it operated that way.

7  
8 I wanted to make it so there was an expression of the  
9 1983 Code of Canon Law, and therefore an expression of the  
10 organic growth that has gone on in the life of the Church  
11 since the Second Vatican Council.

12  
13 MS FURNESS: What did you do that changed it?

14  
15 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: What I did was that I appointed all  
16 the women and some men to the position of chancellor.  
17 Within the canonical system, there's a role of chancellor  
18 in a diocese, and you can have a number of them. It's  
19 possible, then, to create the role that they have to play  
20 by giving them a job description, and that's what we did.

21  
22 MS FURNESS: Clearly, chancellors aren't gender specific?

23  
24 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: No, they are not.

25  
26 MS FURNESS: We have left you behind,  
27 Archbishop Coleridge. However, you have given some  
28 evidence on this before. What is it that you would like to  
29 say about governance in particular?

30  
31 ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: I do agree with Archbishop Fisher  
32 when he says that even if you wanted to, you couldn't  
33 govern in the good old monarchical way of other times. Not  
34 long ago, I finished a very fine biography of  
35 Archbishop Mannix. I thought to myself, how extraordinary,  
36 this man died at a vast age but in my lifetime, and yet  
37 it's as if he is a creature from some other planet.

38  
39 What you see embodied in a man like Mannix - and he  
40 would have been typical of others - is a kind of  
41 monarchical understanding of episcopal governance, and this  
42 has deep historic roots. It has deep theological roots,  
43 too, because if you imagine God as a monarch and then Jesus  
44 as a monarch and the apostles are sent out by Jesus, and  
45 the Pope and the bishops are the successors of the  
46 apostles, the whole structure and the model becomes  
47 monarchical. It had its power and its creativity at

1 a certain historical moment, but now it's like something  
2 from another planet.

3  
4 MS FURNESS: But the structure hasn't changed?

5  
6 ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: The structure is changing, albeit  
7 slowly, but is changing.

8  
9 For instance, if you take Pope Francis, one of the  
10 things that he is dismantling, I think, is the papal court  
11 and the monarchical model of the papal ministry. I think  
12 this was a hugely powerful thing in the past, and it did  
13 confer upon the bishops, even in this country, certainly in  
14 Europe, a rather princely style, which could become  
15 autocratic.

16  
17 Power in itself can be creative; it can be  
18 destructive. The call to serve is the call to use power  
19 creatively. Clericalism isn't just power; it's power used  
20 destructively.

21  
22 The other thing that strikes me is that there weren't  
23 in the past, as you seem to imply, Ms Furness, some bishops  
24 who were, as it were, good and others who were bad. The  
25 thing that has struck me and perplexed me is that it seems  
26 to me that all bishops made the same kinds of mistakes in  
27 another time, in this country and elsewhere. The question  
28 of why has exercised my mind mightily in recent decades.

29  
30 If I could put it in these terms, they were invariably  
31 company men, and that had both good and bad aspects about  
32 it, I suspect, but they were more interested in the  
33 institution than in the individual. The sense of  
34 individuality generally, certainly in the culture of the  
35 Church but more broadly in the culture, and still very  
36 strikingly in other cultures around the world - the sense  
37 of the individual is very subdued. It's the body corporate  
38 that really prevails, and I think that was the sense. So  
39 they had this passionate, lifelong commitment to the  
40 defence and promotion of the institution, and it made them  
41 blind to individuals.

42  
43 The other thing that happened, it seems to me, is that  
44 things like abuse were spiritualised, so that our strength  
45 became our weakness. I could talk at length about that,  
46 and I may refer to it again later in this particular panel  
47 session; I'm not sure. But there was a spiritualisation of



1 what was going on, which amounted to a complete blindness  
2 to the reality.

3  
4 This became all the more striking in a post-Freudian  
5 world where we became aware, the whole society but  
6 certainly the Church became aware, of what we would now  
7 call pathologies and therefore various compulsions and  
8 addictions, which were unknown in a pre-Freudian world. So  
9 all of that erupted at the same time - how to understand  
10 the abuse of the young in a post-Freudian world as we come  
11 to grips with the nature of the pathologies to which the  
12 human being is liable.

13  
14 MS FURNESS: Thank you, archbishop. Just one minute,  
15 Archbishop Wilson.

16  
17 Archbishop Fisher, you spoke before of there being  
18 more empathy now, and in your statement you refer many  
19 times to compassion. How do you engender empathy and  
20 compassion in a person?

21  
22 ARCHBISHOP FISHER: One factor in this area we have talked  
23 about today you have already identified, and that is just  
24 hearing from people who have suffered. If you have never  
25 heard them or met them, you might have some notion about  
26 what's awry, what's wrong. It is only when you hear people  
27 speak of just how it has damaged them and how long-lasting  
28 that has been, how it has played out in many aspects of  
29 their life and then how it has affected those around them  
30 too, such as their family members - so I think hearing from  
31 people who have suffered is one thing that most hearts - it  
32 will bring some echo in that heart.

33  
34 I think there are other things you have to do to work  
35 on building a culture of compassion and encouraging  
36 compassion in the young, in people as they are maturing, in  
37 people in formation. One thing you do is put them in lots  
38 of different situations where people have various kinds of  
39 suffering or challenges, not just one, but we take, for  
40 instance, our young men in the seminary and we put them in  
41 lots of different situations. It could be in dealing with  
42 unemployed people or prisoners or sick people in hospital  
43 or disabled people. We have a deaf ministry in this  
44 diocese. There are many different kinds of suffering. You  
45 put them with those people and you ask such people to help  
46 mentor them, help them understand what their challenges  
47 are, what pains they have suffered.

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MS FURNESS: Wasn't that part of the ministry in the past, that pastors would deal with and treat the sick and speak to those in need?

ARCHBISHOP FISHER: I don't think, for instance, a seminarian, right back then, would have had any of those pastoral experiences. It was only once he was ordained that he was thrown into works like that, and possibly not had any mentoring, either. He was just given the collar and the status and expected to know what to do.

MS FURNESS: And the cane, if he was a Christian Brother.

ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: The strap.

ARCHBISHOP FISHER: Possibly, yes, and some kind of punishment. Now I think there is much more a sense that this has to be cultivated in people. It has to be monitored that it is actually demonstrating itself, too, so that some people who don't demonstrate any ability to feel compassion - that's a warning sign that if it can't be cultivated in them, they are not an appropriate person for ministry going forward.

MS FURNESS: Archbishop Wilson?

ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Ms Furness, I just wanted to say that there are some changes that are already levelled at bishops in the way that they run their dioceses, in that there are many different decisions a bishop makes when he has to consult people. The consultation is meant to be that he really listens to what they say, but there are some decisions when it comes to the point where the people who sit around the table control the decisions that he makes. Every diocese has to have a finance council. Within certain parameters, the bishop cannot make a decision without the permission of those people who are around that table.

MS FURNESS: That's in relation to money?

ARCHBISHOP WILSON: In relation to money, that's right. So there are ways in which the Church is gradually moving towards new ways of doing things.

COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: Can I just ask one question

1 related to that. Can I just put a proposition to you, and  
2 it is directly related to this and the new model of  
3 governance that you have talked about in your own  
4 archdiocese.

5  
6 Had the bishops in Australia adopted the opportunities  
7 and the possibilities presented by the Second Vatican  
8 Council in terms of pastoral councils and parish councils  
9 with true and genuine gusto, would not some of the problems  
10 that occurred in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, and certainly  
11 the responses, have been quite different?  
12

13 Isn't it the truth that in fact for more than  
14 40 years, many of the things that are necessary both to  
15 abate risk and then to respond to risk appropriately were  
16 available to each and every bishop in Australia - some did  
17 it; most didn't - and over that time, it has waxed and  
18 waned? So the question is why is it that a Church that was  
19 presented with such possibility, such collective wisdom and  
20 opportunities, simply failed, failed to do that? Now we  
21 talk about them as something new, something rediscovered,  
22 but they were always available. I think most people, in  
23 looking at this issue, struggle to understand that.  
24

25 So appreciating that it is changing - and each of you  
26 have indicated that - the lost opportunity seems  
27 extraordinary, with devastating consequences. So I just  
28 want to ask Archbishop Wilson, given that your archdiocese  
29 actually did follow through on that, do you have any  
30 insight as to why the Australian Church, by and large, did  
31 not embrace those practices in a consistent way over the  
32 last four decades?  
33

34 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: I think that there were many different  
35 reasons why they didn't do it. I think in some places they  
36 made an attempt at it, and it failed, it didn't work, so  
37 they just let it go. But I don't have any answer for why  
38 people haven't taken up what is contained in the 1983 Code.  
39

40 ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: If I might, Commissioner?  
41 Structures were set up. Many, many parishes set up  
42 pastoral councils and still have them. But structures are  
43 only as good as the people you put in them, and I'm afraid  
44 many of the structures did struggle, and even fail, because  
45 the people who were in those structures seemed unable to do  
46 what the structure itself required.  
47

1           If anything has emerged clearly, I suppose, in these  
2 years since the Second Vatican Council, it would be that we  
3 are never going to be saved by a structure. They do  
4 matter, but, really, a structure is, as I say, as good as  
5 the people you put in it.

6  
7           The other thing is that the dioceses of this country,  
8 and the parishes therefore, vary enormously. Whereas the  
9 Archdiocese of Brisbane can have councils and all these  
10 wonderful structures that were authorised by the Second  
11 Vatican Council, it's a bit harder for Wilcannia-Forbes,  
12 for quite obvious reasons. So that has to be taken into  
13 account.

14  
15           I do agree with your general claim that there has been  
16 a missed opportunity. I'm not sure it has been quite as  
17 dramatically missed as your question suggests,  
18 Commissioner, but there are many reasons why the  
19 opportunity was missed. Some of them at least, I think,  
20 come back to individuals, by which I mean bishops, priests  
21 and others, who populated these structures but in a way  
22 that was ineffectual.

23  
24           COMMISSIONER FITZGERALD: Without labouring the point,  
25 doesn't that go to the fact that associated with the  
26 establishment of those structures, both parish councils and  
27 pastoral councils, would have needed to be a very  
28 significant commitment to training and formation? Whilst  
29 I absolutely agree that the personalities and the  
30 individuals matter, one of the absences - and it is  
31 a question, archbishop - was that when they were  
32 established, was there a genuine commitment to the  
33 formation, training and skills development of the people  
34 that populated the structures? You are absolutely right,  
35 structures won't get you anywhere unless the people in them  
36 have those capacities.

37  
38           ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: I think, again, the experience was  
39 sporadic. Again, Archbishop Wilson has referred to the  
40 whole Cardijn tradition that had taken root in the  
41 Archdiocese of Adelaide, which was precisely a formation of  
42 the kind of which you speak. I think in other parts of  
43 Australia, too, there were genuine attempts to induct  
44 people really into the vision of the Second Vatican  
45 Council, but it wasn't easy, in part because the vision  
46 itself was so dramatically different from what we had  
47 known.

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So, yes, there were failures at adult education and deeper formation, but it wasn't as if attempts weren't made. At some point, we seemed to run out of steam on that front of adult formation or adult education, and people just weren't prepared to turn up. So that was another problem - a loss of momentum or a loss of energy on that front, which is vital, as you say.

MS FURNESS: Archbishop Coleridge, you spoke about Wilcannia-Forbes having difficulties, and presumably any regional or remote parish would. Isn't it the responsibility, to some extent, of the archdiocese to assist those sorts of parishes?

ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: Well, some of that does go on. The Archdiocese of Brisbane, I know, resources very heavily in all kinds of ways the very large and, in some ways, remote dioceses to our north. I know it happens in New South Wales with regard to the understanding between Sydney, with all its resources, and Wilcannia-Forbes. So a lot of this goes on, and the Australian Bishops Conference offers all kinds of assistance to the very remote Diocese of Broome. So there is quite a bit of that collaboration that goes on. There could be more, but I think there is already quite a bit that goes on.

MS FURNESS: So if, indeed, a small parish was struggling, one could look to the archdiocese to say, "Well, it's your turn to help this parish"?

ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: That also goes on. Again, I can speak only of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, really, and that is that we have centralised resources, which are constantly offered to communities that lack them. Sometimes there is enthusiastic take-up. Other times they look the other way, and you can't really force the issue - well, I can try. I can urge, cajole, encourage and all of that, but I can't rule by fiat.

MS FURNESS: Archbishop Hart, there has been some evidence, particularly from the Catholics for Renewal, about the need for and the lack of synods, plenaries, pastoral councils and those sorts of structures to enable the Church, the leadership of the Church, to hear from the laity and speak with the laity about issues affecting the Church.

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ARCHBISHOP HART: I think that was the major idea in this context as to why the 2020 plenary council was put forward. May I just digress for a minute?

MS FURNESS: Certainly.

ARCHBISHOP HART: In a parish, I always saw myself as a talent scout. Your parish really is only as good as the people you have and who you can draw in to things. One of the challenges that we sometimes face at parish level - some parishes do very well because they have a whole lot of gifted people; some parishes are lacking in that regard.

Now, if we then apply that to dioceses, there are big dioceses with a lot of resources and the challenge is how to involve the people in a whole lot of areas. It may be in areas through the relative offices for evangelisation, education, and so on, and to draw people in. I know we did have a Catholic Education Commission in Victoria and perhaps in the context that Archbishop Coleridge mentioned, it ran out of a bit of steam, and whilst the Commission is there, the big Catholic Education board doesn't go ahead quite so much.

So it depends where you are. There are good things. It depends on the impetus and it depends on the ability to address and discuss the needs and topics.

MS FURNESS: A witness who gave evidence recently said that, in her experience, parish councils and parishes generally tend to grow in participation the more the parish priest allows there to be others, particularly laypeople, who participate in decision-making, and then when that parish priest moves on and you have one who is more autocratic, participation drops.

ARCHBISHOP HART: That's my point about being the talent scout. If you can identify people and give them their ability to serve, to use their gifts, that parish will flourish.

MS FURNESS: Just coming back to my question about the synods, you refer to a plenary council?

ARCHBISHOP HART: There is projected a plenary council for Australia in 2020. Archbishop Coleridge is leading the

1 committee with, I think, Archbishop Wilson. You are on  
2 that, aren't you?

3  
4 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: I am.

5  
6 ARCHBISHOP HART: The idea is to make it not just  
7 a meeting of the bishops in another guise but to be  
8 preceded by a broad-based consultation and to be really  
9 participatory so that we will not merely learn the lessons,  
10 the important lessons that the Commission has to give us,  
11 but so that we will grow as a Church, as the people of God,  
12 with all of the gifts and talents we have.

13  
14 MS FURNESS: So, Archbishop Wilson, is it prepared that  
15 there will be organised and structured and formal  
16 consultation with laypeople, among others, leading up to  
17 the plenary council?

18  
19 ARCHBISHOP WILSON: Archbishop Coleridge is in charge of  
20 this process at the moment, but, yes, I can say that the  
21 idea about doing this actually comes from an initiative of  
22 Pope John Paul II, who at the beginning of the new  
23 millennium said that he thought that every local church -  
24 say in Australia - needed to have a plenary council,  
25 a gathering like that, that would involve all the people,  
26 consultation with laypeople, religious and clergy, and so  
27 on, in determining what it is that we want to characterise  
28 the way that we move into this new century. So in  
29 explaining it, I've been saying that I think what we need  
30 to do is to formulate a national pastoral plan that covers  
31 all the works we want to do.

32  
33 MS FURNESS: Archbishop Coleridge, is it expected that  
34 there be consultation with advocacy groups and survivors of  
35 child sexual abuse in that consultation process?

36  
37 ARCHBISHOP COLERIDGE: As far as I'm concerned, there will  
38 be consultation with as many people as we can possibly  
39 consult. Unless it is that kind of consultation, it's  
40 hardly worth going to the trouble of having a thing as  
41 complex as a plenary council. So yes.

42  
43 MS FURNESS: Thank you. Your Honour, I notice the time.

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45 THE CHAIR: Yes, very well. We will adjourn now until -  
46 10?  
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MS FURNESS: Thank you, your Honour.

THE CHAIR: We will adjourn until 10 in the morning

AT 4PM THE COMMISSION WAS ADJOURNED  
TO FRIDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 10AM