

MEDIA RELEASE

Melbourne Royal Commission public hearing starts next week



20 November 2015

The Royal Commission's public hearing into the Archdiocese of Melbourne will start next Tuesday (24 November) in the County Court of Victoria in Melbourne. It will be the 35th public hearing and the 12th into a Catholic institution since the Commission started public hearings in September 2013.

The Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council CEO, Francis Sullivan, said it will again be incumbent on all Church witnesses appearing before the hearing to be fully cooperative and to speak the truth without defensiveness or anger.

"This hearing is an important opportunity for abuse survivors to tell their stories and for church representatives to explain how they responded to the claims of abuse," Mr Sullivan said.

"Church witnesses need to, as best they can, explain their involvement with openness and transparency so all can see the Church continues to come before the Commission prepared to reveal all, come what may."

The Melbourne hearing will be broken into two parts with the first two weeks expected to deal with child sexual abuse which that took place in the Doveton Holy Family Parish and Primary School in the 1970s.

It will also examine the way in which the then Archbishop, Frank Little, responded to claims of abuse by another six priests in the Archdiocese of Melbourne in 70s and 80s.

The second part of the hearing, which is expected to commence in the week of December 7, is a continuation of the Ballarat hearing which started in May this year in Ballarat.

Cardinal Pell is expected to give evidence about his involvement in both case studies both as a priest in Ballarat and then as an Auxiliary Bishop to Archbishop Little in Melbourne.

It is expected Cardinal Pell, who will be separately represented at the hearing, will appear in the final week of the hearing which is scheduled to finish on Friday 18 December.

The public hearing will be streamed live to the public via webcast on the Royal Commission's website at www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au

Anyone wishing to be part of the hearing can contact the Commission through its website at <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/public-hearings>

Media contact: Michael Salmon 0417 495 018

The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's engagement with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

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Truth Justice and Healing Council

PO Box 4593 KINGSTON ACT 2604 | Tel: +61 2 6234 0900 | Fax: +61 2 6234 0999