

MEDIA RELEASE



Royal Commission lays out timetable for hearings: Towards Healing to be examined in December

17 September, 2013

Counsel assisting the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse, Gail Furness, has laid out the timetable for public hearings this year and early next year with the Catholic Church's Towards Healing likely to be examined in December.

The Commission started public hearings in Sydney yesterday (16 September) by looking into the "case study" of Steven Larkins, a former Scouts leader who was recently convicted of child abuse in the NSW Hunter Valley.

In her opening statement to the Commission Ms Furness listed the public hearings for this year and forecast for next year:

In 2013 the Commission will look at:

- The institutional responses to the conduct of Steven Larkins, once a Scout leader and formerly General Manager of Hunter Aboriginal Children's Services (HACS) in New South Wales. Five institutions are the focus of this hearing: Scouts Australia, New South Wales, HACS, two State agencies who had responsibility for checking people who worked with children, together with the NSW Police Force.
- Jonathan Luke Lord, formerly a child care worker employed by the YMCA Sydney, who is now incarcerated following his conviction for child sexual abuse.
- Compensation and litigation of child sexual assault cases on NSW North Coast in the Anglican Diocese of Grafton
- The establishment, operation and review of Towards Healing, including how the process works in practice

Investigation is underway for hearings in 2014, and will include:

- An undisclosed orphanage
- One or more institutions of the Catholic Church and Salvation Army

The opening statements from both Commissioner Justice Peter McClellan AM and Council assisting, Gail Furness can be found at: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/public-hearings/new-case-study-1/>

The Truth Justice and Healing Council was established by the Catholic Church in Australia to coordinate the Church's response to the Royal Commission.

Its role is to oversee the Church's engagement with the Commission, to develop new policies to protect children and young people and to help the Church respond to any future complaints appropriately and with justice, putting the needs of victims first.

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