

Catholic Church Insurance

Statement addressing allegations about CCI and *Towards Healing* *Peter Rush, Chief Executive Officer of CCI*

Catholic Church Insurance Limited (CCI) categorically denies the allegation that *Towards Healing* was developed by CCI to manage the financial impact of abuse claims on the Church.

Towards Healing is a pastoral response to help victims and prevent abuse. Before it was introduced in 1997, a very large number of victims had kept silent for decades, and had not gone to the police. *Towards Healing* not only gave them the opportunity to come forward and receive care and reparation, but through its process, it encouraged victims to report criminal matters to the police.

Towards Healing does not remove the option of litigation for victims. It provides them with an alternative.

Over the years, as the extent of sexual abuse and its terrible consequences began to be understood by the Church, CCI has worked collaboratively with and provided ongoing financial support to *Towards Healing* through an annual grant to the National Committee for Professional Standards, as well as funding for the employment of a Prevention and Protection Officer.

In part because of the *Towards Healing* process, there have been very few cases of abuse occurring since its inception in 1997.

Established in 1911, CCI is wholly owned by the Church, with all dioceses and many religious institutes being shareholders. We have provided insurance support to the various entities of the Catholic Church in Australia for over 100 years.

CCI is a public company that meets the standards of operation and solvency required by Australian legislation and is regulated by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority.

Operating surpluses allow us to support the Church's pastoral work by distributions to Catholic entities and dividends to Church shareholders. As a Church-owned company, a number of Church members hold positions on the company's board. This has included, until 2004, the Executive Officer of the National Committee for Professional Standards, which oversees *Towards Healing*. Sound corporate governance principles have been applied in the appointment and activities of all CCI directors.

We issue a broad range of policies appropriate for Church organisations and commensurate with the risks which they face. Premiums are competitive and claims are assessed according to the terms of the policies.

We have offered public liability insurance policies since 1969, which have been taken out by various parts of the Church. These policies respond to some abuse claims made by victims. All Australian dioceses and many religious orders now hold this insurance with CCI. Of those that are not insured with CCI, some have never been insured, while others have held policies with the company at different times. Those not insured with CCI have placed their cover in the general insurance market.

No policy issued by CCI has provided indemnity, or any other form of financial assistance, to offenders in civil or criminal matters.

Allegations of document destruction

CCI categorically denies the allegation that it destroyed Church personnel files.

CCI would never have been able to possess “40 boxes of personnel files” relating to the Church. The only reason CCI holds information on clergy is in the event of a claim. In this case a **copy** of the relevant information is held in our claim file. CCI retains every liability claims file.

To assist the Royal Commission, all of these files have been scanned and coded to Federal Court standard to assist with any specific line of inquiry they are pursuing.

We urge Dr Robert Grant to share his experience with the Royal Commission, which we believe is the appropriate body to investigate, test and form judgement on such allegations.

Allegations of lawyers negotiating with victims

The *Towards Healing* protocol is very clear that Church legal representatives are only involved when a victim chooses to have legal representation. The intention of this is to allow legal representatives to liaise with each other on issues of legal liability.

The allegations put forward by Lateline on 8 August 2013 are difficult to address because they have never been put to CCI and we are unable to identify the particular matter without further details.

Our recommendation is that the relevant documents are provided to the Royal Commission for investigation and an informed judgement.