

# UPDATE 10

## Royal Commission *Towards Healing* Hearing



22 January 2014

The Royal Commission today resumed its hearing into the Catholic Church's *Towards Healing* protocol with evidence from the NSW ACT Director of Professional Standards, Michael Salmon, into the case of a man, DK, who had been abused at St Augustines College, run by the Marist Brothers in Cairns.

Mr Salmon acted as a facilitator during the DK *Towards Healing*. Much of today's evidence has revolved around whether DK had been informed that Mr Salmon while acting as a facilitator was also employed by the Church and the extent to which this employment could be either a conflict or at least seen as a conflict of interest.

Mr Salmon was also asked about the way in which *Towards Healing* operated around the country and the consistency of both implementation and outcomes. Mr Salmon said he believed consistency is something to be worked towards but the nature of individual cases and circumstances made it difficult to achieve.

Mr Salmon said it was his view the facilitator in a *Towards Healing* process should actively support the victim and work to achieve the best possible outcome for the damaged person.

"The whole practice and procedure of *Towards Healing* over recent years has been to get church authorities to come out of their bunkers and to engage pastorally with people like DK," Mr Salmon said.

Mr Salmon agreed consideration should be given to separating reparation from the pastoral component of *Towards Healing*. He also agreed the Church has an obligation to meet long-term costs relating to counselling.

"The Church generally accepts now the devastating impact of abuse on some people and that for many, healing is a life-long journey.

At the conclusion of Mr Salmon's evidence Br Gerald Burns, Marist Brother and retired principal of St Augustine's College in Cairns during the time when DK was abused, started giving evidence.

Questioning focused on the understanding of what constituted sexual abuse at that time and how perceptions have changed since the early 1980s and Br Burns' involvement in the DK *Towards Healing* process.

Br Burns' will continue giving evidence tomorrow.

For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: [www.tjhcouncil.org.au](http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au)  
For information on the Royal Commission go to: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>

Contact: Michael Salmon 0417 495 018