

# UPDATE 31

## Royal Commission Christian Brothers Case Perth



30 April 2014

Day three (Wednesday 30 April) of the Perth Royal Commission hearing into the experience of child migrants and other young boys at Christian Brothers orphanages and farm schools in WA during the 1950s and 60s continued today.

The first witness to give evidence today was Mr Edward Delaney, who was born in England in 1949. Mr Delaney was taken from a Barnados home in England and sent to Australia without his mother's knowledge or consent when he was five.

Mr Delaney gave evidence that he was physically and sexually abused by the Brothers at Bindoon from the age of 12. On one occasion, when he was 10 or 11 years old, a Brother broke his fingers on both his hands by belting him repeatedly with a leather strap that had a hacksaw blade stitched into it.

Mr Delaney still has a deformity caused by this abuse.

The Commission heard Mr Delaney was 13 when he was first sexually abused by a Brother who was transferred to Tasmania, apparently due to the abuse.

When Mr Delaney was 18 and after having left Bindoon, he reported the abuse to Police at Mount Lawley. He was not believed and told that if he continued the allegation he would be charged.

Mr Delaney told the Commission the legacy of Bindoon had been with him every day of his life. "I was raped and physically abused over an extended period of time as a youngster. I learnt to forever fear and keep my guard up on not trust people."

Following the conclusion of Mr Delaney's evidence Mr Gordon Grant read his witness statement to the Commission.

Mr Grant was born in Wales and placed in an orphanage as a baby when his parents' marriage failed. When he was nearly 14 years old, he was sent to Australia and Bindoon.

Mr Grant gave evidence that at Bindoon, the Brothers physically abused him and other boys, using a leather strap, heavy stick, boots or fists. The Commission heard Mr Grant was sexually abused by a number of Brothers at Bindoon.

Mr Grant was the last of the eleven former residents of the Brother's WA institutions to give evidence to the Commission.

Following Mr Grant's evidence Professor Maria Harries gave evidence. Professor Harries was the inaugural Chairperson of the Christian Brothers' Ex-Residents Services (CBERS) scheme, set up in 1995, to help former child residents of the WA institutions deal with the trauma and abuse. Professor Harries is also a member of the Truth Justice and Healing Council.

Professor Harries was initially helped in establishing the independent scheme by Dr Paul Carman, a senior consulting paediatrician, and Professor David Plowman Director of the Graduate School of Management at the University of WA and a former child migrant and resident of Tardun.

In a statement Professor Harries told the Commission the scheme provided counselling and support to men and partners of people who had been in the WA institutions.

The services, which are not means tested or influenced by any legal action or earlier payments, include help to find personal information and family details including help tracing family members, with financial assistance with travel and counselling services.

Prof Harries said there had been initial questions about the independence of the scheme given it was funded by the Brothers but that within two years the scheme had proved trustworthy.

In her statement Professor Harries said that between 1994 and 2005 some 528 individuals had registered for services including counselling, reunification assistance and advocacy.

The scheme was officially closed in 2005, after the survivors who used the service told the management it was time for a new drop in service. This was subsequently established with funding from the Brothers by an independent counsellor previously associated with CBERS.

Professor Harries told the Commission when talking about the survivors who attended CBERS it was made “very clear from the beginning, we accepted people on the basis of their need and we honoured their history and we were bearing witness all the time to the terrible experiences they have had and that they were believed.”

Professor Harries said they had never been any interference or influence, other than funding, on the service by the Brothers.

At the conclusion of the Professor. Harries evidence Ms Emma White, Acting Director General of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support gave evidence about current child protection policies and procedures in WA.

The hearing will continue 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/>

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