

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Royal Commission releases findings in Nestor public hearing



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The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has released its report into the response of the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong to allegations of child sexual abuse against John Gerard Nestor, a former priest of the diocese.

The report, tabled in Federal Parliament on Friday 19 December, follows a public hearing held in Sydney in June this year.

Nestor was convicted of child sexual abuse offences but was acquitted on appeal in October 1997.

However, Bishop Philip Wilson, the then bishop of Wollongong, and subsequently Bishop Peter Ingham held the view that he was not suitable to work with children and he was eventually laicised, or dismissed from the priesthood, in October 2008 following lengthy canonical processes.

The Royal Commission makes positive findings about the way the Nestor case was handled, including the steps taken by Bishop Wilson to keep Nestor on administrative leave despite his acquittal on appeal of criminal convictions.

Evidence before the Royal Commission included evidence about an interview which Fr Brian Lucas conducted with Nestor in 1993 of which no notes were kept.

While the report found general failings in the note taking practices of Fr Lucas it did not find Nestor had admitted sexually abusing children in the interview.

Mr Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, said the report reflected positively on the way two senior Bishops had worked hard to have Nestor removed from the priesthood.

"What we have seen with this case study is that while the process is time consuming, when church leaders recognise the problem and put in the effort the right result is achieved," he said.

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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](http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au)

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