

MEDIA RELEASE

Royal Commission to hold joint public hearing into Archdiocese of Melbourne and Ballarat



4 September 2015

The Royal Commission will hold a joint public hearing to inquire into the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the continuation of the Ballarat hearing.

The hearing will commence sometime between 23 November and 18 December 2015 in Melbourne at the County Court of Victoria.

It will hear evidence from witnesses common to each hearing with the Archdiocese of Melbourne component focusing on the experience of survivors of child sexual abuse by Catholic clergy associated with the Holy Family Parish, Doveton, and Holy Family Primary School, Doveton.

In a statement in July this year the Commission said it anticipated Cardinal Pell, former Melbourne and Sydney Archbishop and Ballarat priest, and Bishop Mulkearns, former Bishop of Ballarat, would give evidence at the Melbourne hearing.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council said the latest hearing would look at what has been a very confronting story coming out of the outer eastern Melbourne suburb of Doveton.

"For more than 20 years, up to the late 1990s, a string of priests, who were either convicted of or charged with child abuse related matters, worked in the Doveton Parish and area.

"Together they damaged the lives of countless children and young people in Doveton and other parishes in which they worked.

"This hearing, which will run alongside the second stage of the Commission's inquiry into clergy abuse in the Ballarat diocese, will again reveal the detail of horrendous child sexual abuse.

"It will require members of the Catholic Church to come before the Commission and explain fully and honestly their involvement with these offending priests and how they responded to abuse survivors.

"Again it will be a harrowing and distressing time for all involved but most particularly for the abuse victims and their families and friends as they come forward to give evidence."

The Commission has also announced that further evidence in the Ballarat hearing, including the response of the Christian Brothers, will be heard in Ballarat in the first half of next year. The scope and purpose of the Ballarat hearing remains unchanged.

The public hearing will be streamed live to the public via webcast on the Royal Commission's website at www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au

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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: www.tjhcouncil.org.au