

UPDATE 9

Royal Commission *Towards Healing* Hearing



19 December 2013

Towards Healing, the Catholic Church's protocol for dealing with allegations of sexual abuse, is the focus of the fourth public hearing of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which continued in Sydney today. This hearing commenced on 9 December 2013.

The first block of hearings into *Towards Healing* concluded today, with Bishop Jarratt from Lismore returning to the witness box to give evidence.

Bishop Jarrett was asked about the processes in place in the Lismore Diocese for the management of priests who had a finding that there was a 'semblance of truth' in relation to an allegation of child sexual abuse.

Bishop Jarratt was asked about a process instituted by the Holy See in Rome, shortly before he became Bishop of Lismore in 2001, which required all such priests to be referred to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He said that he had not become aware of the existence of the process until representatives of the Diocese attended a canon law conference in 2006 after which the Diocese had instituted procedures to ensure that the process was complied with.

After Bishop Jarrett finished giving evidence lawyer Peter Kelso, who represented Mrs Ingham during her *Towards Healing* facilitation, gave evidence about his involvement in her case including the terms of his cost agreement.

Former Marist provincial and director of Professional Standards, Br Alexis Turton, was also recalled to the witness box to continue his evidence on the DK case. Issues raised with him included:

- the process he had followed in attempting to identify the third brother who had allegedly abused DK
- whether he took any steps to arrange for a dialogue between DK and another brother following the facilitation, and
- whether it was appropriate for Br Turton to have undertaken all the roles he did during DK's *Towards Healing* process.

Following the conclusion of Br Turton's evidence the hearing was adjourned. The hearing of Case Study 4 will resume in the Commission on January 22, to conclude evidence in relation to the DK case study.

The case studies being examined in Case Study 4 are focused on the experience of victims resident in Queensland. On the first day of the hearing the Royal Commission advised that there would be further case studies examining the implementation of *Towards Healing* for victims in other parts of Australia. It is anticipated these further case studies will be listed during 2014.

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

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