

# UPDATE 20

## Royal Commission John Ellis Hearing



13 March 2014

On Wednesday and Thursday this week the Royal Commission hearing has focused on the implementation of *Towards Healing* in the case of John Ellis and the way in which this process interacted with the subsequent litigation which Mr Ellis initiated in 2004.

John Davoren, the then NSW ACT director of professional standards office gave evidence that he had received the complaint from Mr Ellis in June 2002 and that he was responsible for the matter until April 2003 when he resigned from the position and Michael Salmon took over as Director.

Mr Daveron was vigorously cross-examined about the way in which he had handled the Ellis case and in particular whether he believed that Mr Ellis had actually been abused given the perpetrator, Fr Aiden Duggan, was in a nursing home suffering from dementia and unable to provide any comment on the abuse.

Following Mr Daveron's evidence the current NSW ACT Director of Professional Standards, Mr Michael Salmon gave evidence that shortly after taking over the case he formed the view Mr Ellis had been abused by Fr Duggan and that he accepted Mr Ellis was telling the truth. Mr Salmon appointed an assessor who investigated the complaint and confirmed that the abuse had occurred.

Mr Salmon gave evidence that he thought the original offer of \$25,000 to Mr Ellis was "underdone". The offer to Mr Ellis was subsequently increase to \$30,000 despite Mr Ellis seeking \$100,000.

Mr Salmon was asked by Justice McClellan to provide some personal insights into the problems associated with *Towards Healing*.

"I think one of the weaknesses in *Towards Healing* was to look at a process as being closed at a certain point rather than at least creating the opportunity for an ongoing connection with the church authority to monitor a person's needs going forward. I think that's where I think *Towards Healing* has had a weakness," Mr Salmon said.

Mr Salmon put forward the Sydney Archdiocesan approach to *Towards Haling* in recent years as a model where victims can continue to approach the Archdiocese to help them with their needs for many years and sometimes for life.

At the conclusion of Mr Salmon's evidence Mr Raymond Brazil, the facilitator in the John Ellis *Towards Healing* process gave evidence.

Mr Brazil has been involved in more 20 *Towards Healing* cases and said he had feedback from the majority of victims that they had been assisted by the process.

The day's evidence concluded with Monsignor Brian Rayner, former vicar general and Chancellor of Sydney Archdiocese giving evidence which commenced with a detailed run down of the structure of the Chancellor's office in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

Monsignor Rayner's evidence will continue next week. Justice McClelland adjourned the Commission until Monday next week.

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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