

MEDIA RELEASE

Rockhampton Royal Commission public hearing starts next week



9 April 2015

The Royal Commission's public hearing into St Joseph's Orphanage Neerkol will start next Tuesday (14 April) in Rockhampton.

The hearing will inquire into the experiences of a number of men and women who were residents at the orphanage between 1940 and 1975.

The commission will hear about the responses of the Sisters of Mercy, the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton and the State Government to complaints of child sexual abuse which took place at the orphanage.

The Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council CEO, Francis Sullivan, said the hearing is an important opportunity for the former residents at the orphanage to tell their stories to the Commission and the broader community.

"This will be a forensic examination of what happened to some of the former residents, how they were treated and how the Sisters and the Diocese responded to their claims of abuse.

"This latest hearing will see the leaders of both the Sisters of Mercy and the Rockhampton Diocese explain and be fully transparent about what happened at the time and also what has been put in place since to help former residents," Mr Sullivan said.

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

Anyone wishing to be part of the hearing can contact the Commission through its website at <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/public-hearings>

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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

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