

MEDIA RELEASE



Royal Commission to hear evidence from retired Bishop Geoffrey Robinson: architect of *Towards Healing*

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The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse will hold a public hearing in Sydney on Monday 24 August 2015 to hear evidence from retired Bishop Geoffrey Robinson into the approach of the Catholic Church in Australia to child sexual abuse survivors prior to the commencement of *Towards Healing* in 1996.

The hearing will specifically examine evidence from Bishop Robinson in relation to:

- The history and development of the Catholic Church's response to child sexual abuse prior to the introduction of *Towards Healing*.
- His membership of the College of Consultors of the Archdiocese of Sydney.
- The operation of Encompass Australasia.
- His discussions with senior Vatican officials.

In his capacity as a member of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in 1994, Bishop Robinson led the creation, review and amendment of *Towards Healing* over many years.

Bishop Robinson, who retired as auxiliary bishop of Sydney in 2004, has been outspoken about the need for the Church to confront clergy sex abuse.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, which is representing the Church before the Commission, said Bishop Robinson would be able to provide invaluable material to the Royal Commission.

"Bishop Robinson was very much at the centre of the decision making process which led to the creation of *Towards Healing*," Mr Sullivan said.

"He also has a deep knowledge of the actions and thinking of the Church for many years before *Towards Healing* commenced."

Towards Healing is the Catholic Church's redress protocol offered to a person who has been abused by a priest, religious or other Catholic Church personnel. The experiences of survivors in *Towards Healing* have varied with some people finding it to be of value while others have not.

Despite *Towards Healing* having been heavily criticised by the Royal Commission a number of Church personnel have also been criticised by the Commission for not following its procedures.

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.

For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

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