

Royal Commission Case Study 44

John Joseph Farrell TJHC update



Tuesday September 20, 2016 – Day 6

Day 6 of the Royal Commission's hearing (Case Study 44) into the response of Catholic Church authorities to allegations of child sexual abuse by John Joseph Farrell continued in Sydney today with Fr Brian Lucas giving further evidence about abuse perpetrated by John Farrell and recollections of a meeting with Farrell and Fathers Usher and Peters in 1992.

Farrell was charged with child sexual offences in 1987 and 1998 but both cases were dismissed.

The 63-year-old was sentenced to a minimum jail term of 18 years in May this year after being convicted of 62 offences involving 12 children in Moree, Armidale and Tamworth between 1979 and 1988. He was laicised in 2005 after being stood down from active ministry in 1992.

Fr Lucas continued to be asked about the conflicting understandings of the Special Issues Resource Group meeting in 1992 with Farrell. He maintained that he had no memory of Farrell making detailed admissions about abusing children in the meeting.

A contemporaneous account of the meeting from Fr Wayne Peters who was at the meeting records Farrell admitting to having "sexually interfered with" five boys.

Fr Lucas told the Commission that there was no information provided in the meeting that would have led to him reporting Farrell to the Police. He told the Commission that at the time the police were already aware of Farrell and that Farrell had not named any victims.

Fr Lucas was questioned extensively about file notes, draft media releases and other documents which were drafted and distributed both publically and internally around the time of the 4 Corners story about Farrell in 2012.

Fr Lucas gave evidence that he was puzzled as to why certain documents were written and actions taken subsequent to the 1992 meeting with Farrell, because if detailed admissions of child sexual abuse had been made a different approach would have been taken in response.

Fr Lucas concluded his evidence before lunch. The hearing will continue tomorrow when Monsignor John Usher will give evidence.

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