

Royal Commission Hearing



UPDATE 1

9 December 2013

Towards Healing, the Catholic Church's protocol for dealing with allegations of sexual abuse, was the focus of the fourth public hearing of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Sydney today. This hearing is expected to run for two weeks.

On day one the Royal Commission heard [opening statements](#) from Senior Counsel assisting the Royal Commission, Gail Furness SC. Ms Furness outlined the *Towards Healing* process. She summarised the four case studies involving the Archdiocese of Brisbane, the Diocese of Lismore and the Marist Brothers. She provided data on victims who had approached *Towards Healing*.

Following Ms Furness' opening address, Counsel representing the Truth Justice and Healing Council, Peter Gray SC, provided an [opening statement](#) during which he read the Truth Justice and Healing Council's commitment statement of apology from the [Towards Healing submission](#). He expressed regret on behalf of the Church to victims of abuse. Mr Gray confirmed the Church's commitment to fully cooperate with the Royal Commission.

Mrs Joan Isaacs, the subject of the first *Towards Healing* case study to be examined by the Royal Commission in this fourth public hearing, read her [witness statement](#) which detailed her dissatisfaction with her experience of the *Towards Healing* process and other dealings with the Catholic Church. The statement was strong and clear.

Following Mrs Isaacs, Dr Ken Robertson who was at the time Director of Professional Standards in Queensland, gave evidence. He talked about the way Mrs Isaacs' case had been handled. He said he hoped the evidence he'd given the Commission provided a deeper understanding of the devastation caused by sexual abuse.

[Transcripts of evidence](#) given today will be on the Royal Commission web site in the next day or two.

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The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's engagement with the Royal Commission.

For more information about the Royal Commission visit:

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