



THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

THE DIOCESE OF BUNBURY

Dr D J Honey, MLA
Chair
Community Development and Justice Standing Committee
Parliament House,
4 Harvest Terrace,
West Perth
WA 6005

Dear Dr Honey,

Submission to the Committee Inquiry into options available to survivors of institutional child sexual abuse in Western Australia

Please find, as requested, the following answers to the Committee Inquiry's Terms of Reference, as relevant to the Anglican Diocese of Bunbury. For the avoidance of doubt I double-checked this particular point with Dr Alan Charlton, as some of the questions are ones that others may be better placed to answer.

The Anglican Diocese of Bunbury has had a scheme for financial reparation, apology and the payment of medical and psychological support for historic sex abuse prior to the 2018 Act and prior to the Royal Commission and the National Redress scheme. The following figures, however, are largely for more recent cases that come within the scrutiny of this Inquiry.

We have had and currently have 18 Redress cases and 8 civil litigation cases. In 4 of these Redress cases the Diocese was deemed not to be responsible. In the majority of others, which have been resolved, these have resulted in financial payments. One of those Redress cases has become a civil litigation case. It is not known whether that is due to delays in the National Redress scheme or for some other reason. 14 of the 18 Redress cases have been finalised and 5 of the 8 civil litigation cases. The payments for civil litigation are normally higher than for Redress. Trying to give an average figure for each category, however, might be misleading. The primary reason for this is that, with both Redress and civil litigation claims, quite a number have included other parties such as the WA government and the Commonwealth. This is because the abuse has occurred in setting such as Fairbridge with more than one entity being responsible. In a number of these particular cases the Diocese of Bunbury has been adjudicated to be responsible for 10% of the total amount, for example.

We have had allegations of sexual abuse made against 8 clergy and 1 layperson, the overwhelming majority of which are historic, dating back to the 1960's. 2 of those clergy, both deceased, were responsible for one third of these cases and one of them was imprisoned twice for his offences and died in prison. One of those clergy just cited and two others have been defrocked. For at least one of these 8 clergy it has yet to be determined whether they

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were responsible for sexual abuse. Another clergyperson was found not guilty, I believe, in three separate criminal trials but is currently the subject of one of these civil cases. Of the 8 clergy, 2 were employed successively at Fairbridge and their connection with the Diocese of Bunbury was that the then Bishop of Bunbury was responsible for licensing them as chaplains. Fairbridge Village itself was not an Anglican entity.

On the whole Redress claims are settled faster than civil claims. It is worth noting that over 60% of Redress claims we have received were marked 'Priority' usually meaning that there is some concern about the health and/or mortality of the applicant. This may be a contributory reason for these claims progressing relatively quickly.

In civil cases it can take months for claims to be resolved, even if this is done so via early mediation and settlement. We do not have control over the speed of these cases, nor indeed over Redress where applicants can also be waiting for some time for adjudication. We have enquired of the National Redress scheme about delay. They point to a number of factors that can slow down resolution.

I trust this information may be of assistance to your Committee.

Kind regards,

+ Ian

Rt. Revd. Dr. Ian Coutts
Bishop of Bunbury