



Community Development and Justice Standing Committee

MEDIA RELEASE

Inquiry into options for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse in WA

An update on the inquiry, and a statement on the Christian Brothers' failure to appear before the Committee

12 July 2024

The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee is finalising its inquiry into options for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse in WA, ahead of tabling its second report to Parliament on 15 August. Today the Committee reiterated its shock and deep disappointment that the leaders of the Christian Brothers in Australia refused to appear at the Committee hearing arranged for 10am yesterday.

Committee Chair, Dr David Honey MLA said, 'Thursday's hearing was agreed to by the Christian Brothers after multiple requests and months of correspondence. The hearing was scheduled specifically to meet their availability. At 4pm on Wednesday we were informed that the Brothers would not be appearing.'

'A week prior to the hearing', Dr Honey said, 'the Committee provided the Christian Brothers a list of questions that would support its questioning in the hearing. Those questions went to areas such as the number of claims against the Christian Brothers under the National Redress Scheme and via civil litigation, the financial resources of the Christian Brothers to meet these claims and details of Christian Brothers who had allegations made against them.' 'The Committee had also', Dr Honey said, 'given the Christian Brothers an assurance that they would not be required to answer questions about matters currently before the courts'.

Dr Honey said that after their failure to attend the hearing, the Committee would write to the Christian Brothers asking them to reconsider their position, and would also write to the Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Timothy Costelloe, asking him to use his moral authority to persuade the Christian Brothers to attend a future hearing.

Dr Honey closed by saying 'the Committee's primary focus in this inquiry is to achieve better outcomes for survivors of institutional child abuse. Participation of the Christian Brothers in the inquiry would assist in this.'

For comment, please contact Dr D.J. Honey MLA, on 0451 750 854.

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