

Good Afternoon Mr. Murray Crowe

Thank you for your time re Public submission in too Charities the two (2) attachments might be of interest, also the email sent to a number of person/s from different walks in life and associations

COPY

I have read with deep concern the excellent article "Scourge of Child Abuse is not limited to institution" one of the most shameful sections reported was " Almost 60% of cases heard by the commission were in institutions run religious groups e.g. orphanages" etc.

The attachments are sent only as to try to state who am I, I am appalled that Royal Commission (RC hereon) didn't questioned the religious institutions as they did the Catholic Church, the RC failed also to its display of equivalence between Government Department's both state & Federal and the Catholic regime, it appear that employees of the Crown escaped being questioned in the same manner as Priest etc. were?

Also Minister of the Crown were NOT questioned in the same manner as Pell & other catholic leaders, why state records were not opened for scrutiny is inexcusable, the past deceit of the records re state wards in Queensland will be interesting when stated they were all lost in the Australian Day floods, who and how is/are going to be determined is entitled to sexual abuse compensation when there are NO records? Will it be the same when ex-Premier Beattie left office with \$100 million on the table for each state ward to receive \$7K? (the dead even received \$7K)

Why didn't the RC question allegations of state wards being sexual abused by servants of the crown? And why weren't those named as Catholic priest were?

The RC was shameful and the taxpayers should be calling for the cost of the RC to paid for by the religious sect/cults who in the main operate their welfare on taxpayers government grants.

This shameful RC should be question, the commissioners on the RC Ex Queensland Police Commissioner Atkinson what was his response to the QPS personal wanting files to the allegations of sexual abuse within institutions?, ex-Senator Andrew Murray what was the finding as to his Senate Inquiry into sexual abuse?

The taxpayers should be asking questions as there are a number of questions still waiting for answer's

Regards'

Mike S Alexander

PO BOX 317
Coorparoo, Qld 4151

M: 041 202 5964

E: mikealex@optusnet.com.au

Attachment:

Confidentiality fears for child abuse royal commission

- **Bridie Jabour**

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- [Queensland survivors and the confidentiality agreements](#)
- [The terms of reference and the "lucky" child sex abuse survivors](#)
- [Ordinary people can become child sex abuse offenders](#)



Child sex abuse survivors have welcomed the royal commission on institutional responses to child sex abuse. *Photo: John Donegan*

Queensland victims of child sex abuse are worried confidentiality agreements they signed in the 1990s may prevent them contributing to the royal commission.

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Though the royal commission on institutional responses to child sex abuse has been welcomed by child sex abuse survivors in Queensland, they are viewing it with a degree of wariness.

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Their concerns come as other advocates call for a focus in the inquiry on "future victims" and how to prevent another generation of children suffering sexual abuse at the hands of adults who would otherwise be "normal people".

Queensland survivors and the confidentiality agreements

Advertisement

Mike Alexander was nine years old when he was raped by a man from the Exclusive Brethren Church.

He was involved in what he calls the "toothless" Queensland Forde Inquiry into child abuse in institutions, which was held in the 1990s.

Mr Alexander was offered \$7000 compensation for his suffering, as long as he signed a confidentiality agreement to stop him speaking publicly about the abuse.

He turned down the cash.

Now an advocate and confidant of child sexual abuse survivors, the 64-year-old says there are concerns they will not be able to speak out during the royal commission, despite the wide ranging legal powers it will have.

"A lot of state wards and a lot of victims have signed confidentially agreements which bars them forever again talking publicly about their abuse," he said.

"Unless they are lifted, why have an inquiry if no one can speak?"

Mr Alexander said he has sought different legal opinions on the matter with some lawyers saying there could be a conflict.

Mr Alexander has been lobbying each state government since the 1990s to lift the confidentiality agreements.

His last letter was sent to Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie last month, when a royal commission looked like only only a remote possibility.

In a statement to Fairfax Media, Mr Bleijie said the varying nature of the confidentiality agreements meant he does not have the power to void them all.

"Anyone who has entered an agreement with the state can contact the relevant government department should they wish to discuss amending the conditions of these agreements," he said.

"As the details of each agreement vary, a confidentiality agreement may not necessarily preclude a person from disclosing details about their case."

Ultimately, Mr Bleijie said, child sex abuse survivors who signed confidentiality agreements would not know whether they could be involved in the royal commission until the terms of reference were released, another contentious point for Mr Alexander.

The terms of reference and the "lucky" child sex abuse survivors

"Now the terms of references must not be set by the people who are going to be investigated, and that's the government in some sections, the terms of references but must be open and transparent and they must be set by people not only from the government," Mr Alexander said.

"The should be set by the people who were abused, police, lawyers and people from both sides of the Parliament, but it must include some victims."

If it was just the government setting the terms of references, Mr Alexander said it would be like a student writing their own exam: "You know what the answers are going to be."

His was also concerned about the time it would take the royal commission to complete its inquiry.

Prime Minister Julia Gillard has rejected calls to put a deadline on the royal commission, with fears it could stretch out to a decade.

"Now they have called a national inquiry and they are talking about even up to 10 years for the inquiry, that will never be," Mr Alexander said.

"The inquiry must be within two to three years and there are a lot of ex-state wards and victims. Some are deceased now, others are getting into their 60s and 70s, and if drags on much longer they will never, ever be heard.

"I'm going to be cynical enough to say that must be in the minds of some politicians."

Mr Alexander has now been happily married for 35 years and has two children, two grandchildren and a stable financial situation.

He is one of the lucky ones.

As someone who has spoken out publicly about child sexual abuse for decades, Mr Alexander has been sought out by other survivors and the children of survivors.

"I have survivors phone me quite regularly and as a matter of fact I had a dreadful case not too long ago," he said.

"A young man phoned me and introduced himself to me on the phone and he told me his mother was very depressed and a company has repossessed his electrical equipment.

"My wife and I decided we would try to get that back and he said his mother was quite sick.

"His mother grew up at (and suffered abuse at a) children's home and that was the reason he phoned me and the next day he phoned me and I said 'look we've got all your electrical equipment, it's going to go back to you'.

"He said 'Mike, it doesn't matter now, Mum hung herself last night'.

"That's the situation we're faced with, it should not have happened."

Ordinary people can become child sex abuse offenders

While Professor Stephen Smallbone sympathised with the victims of child sexual abuse, he said the royal commission should have a focus on prevention, not just justice for people who had already suffered.

The Griffith University professor's research is concerned with understanding and preventing sexual violence and abuse and he says it does not take a huge trauma or a streak of evil to make a paedophile – it can take an average adult and the wrong set of circumstances.

"These are often, otherwise, quite ordinary people, they can become disturbed through their offending but it does not necessarily mean they were disturbed to begin with," Professor Smallbone said.

"(They abuse children) because they can. Often the sexual abuse of children arises out of a particular kind of relationship they have with an adult.

"This happens quite often in families but it's also the way it happens in organisations, the kind of role and the level of authority an adult has with a child brings them into intimate contact with children.

"If they don't have proper boundaries around that relationship it can become sexual and if that sexual impulse isn't controlled right from the word go and if that sexual thought and then a sexual action takes place, well then, at that point the person almost becomes entrapped by it.

"What do they do? Who do they tell? You can't talk to people about these things."

Child sex abuse offenders have become Professor Smallbone's area of interest because he believed if it could be figured out why and how child abuse happened, there was a better chance of prevention.

Essentially, at the root of how and why child abuse happens is the way to stop it.

"There's always a tension in this area, on the one hand the primary concern seems to be the people who have already been victimised, and that's obviously really important but when doing that sometimes it's easy to lose the focus of why and how that occurred in the first place and taking steps to prevent this from happening in the future," Professor Smallbone said.

"My vote would go towards having a focus on prevention in that commission, a very clear, objective focus on trying to understand how these things have occurred.

"You know, using the lessons from the past to benefit us all in the future, that includes whole generations of children who have not been abused yet but who may be, they're the ones we want to prevent from being exposed to this."

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/confidentiality-fears-for-child-abuse-royal-commission-20121115-29eps.html>