

**ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL  
RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

**Public Hearing - Case Study 28  
(Day 84)**

Ballarat Magistrates' Court,  
100 Grenville Street, South Ballarat  
Victoria

On Thursday, 28 May 2015 at 10.00am

Before

The Presiding Member: Justice Peter McClellan AM

Commissioner: Justice Jennifer Ann Coate  
Mr Andrew Murray

Counsel Assisting: Ms Gail Furness SC

1 THE CHAIR: Yes, Ms Furness.  
2  
3 MS FURNESS: Thank you, Your Honour.  
4  
5 <GERALD FRANCIS RIDSDALE, recalled: [10.04]  
6  
7 <EXAMINATION BY MS FURNESS:  
8  
9 Q. Can you hear me?  
10 A. Yes.  
11  
12 Q. Can you see me?  
13 A. I can see you, yes.  
14  
15 Q. Mr Ridsdale, when we adjourned yesterday I was asking  
16 you questions about the circumstances in which you left  
17 Mortlake Parish. Remember that?  
18 A. Yes.  
19  
20 THE CHAIR: Mr Ridsdale, I don't know where the microphone  
21 is in that room, but can it be adjusted so as to make your  
22 voice more clear? Try now.  
23  
24 MS FURNESS: Q. Mr Ridsdale --  
25 A. Is that better?  
26  
27 Q. It is better, thank you. You still have a bundle of  
28 documents with you, Mr Ridsdale?  
29 A. Yes, I have.  
30  
31 Q. Can I ask you to turn to tab 18 of that bundle. They  
32 are the minutes of the Consultors meeting held on  
33 14 September 1982. I take it, you haven't seen  
34 these minutes before, Mr Ridsdale?  
35 A. I haven't. We don't get to see Consultors  
36 meeting minutes.  
37  
38 Q. The minutes record who was present at this meeting,  
39 and firstly, Bishop Mulkearns; secondly, Monsignor Leo  
40 Fiscalini; and thirdly, Father Henry Nolan, Vicar General.  
41 Just stopping there, from the evidence that you gave  
42 yesterday and the documents which have been tendered, the  
43 documents reveal that each of Bishop Mulkearns and  
44 Monsignor Fiscalini and Father Nolan all received  
45 complaints about your conduct in Mortlake; do you remember  
46 that from the evidence yesterday?  
47 A. Right, I do, yes.

1  
2 Q. Father Nolan said that he spoke with you about those  
3 complaints; remember that was in an interview of  
4 Father Nolan?  
5 A. Yes, I remember that bit.  
6  
7 Q. The next attendee at the Consultors meeting is George  
8 Pell; do you see his name there?  
9 A. I see his name, yes.  
10  
11 Q. Did you speak to George Pell, before you left  
12 Mortlake, about what happened in Mortlake and the  
13 complaints about you?  
14 A. No, I don't think so. I can't remember, but I  
15 wouldn't have thought that I'd have any reason to speak to  
16 any of the Consultors.  
17  
18 Q. In terms of George Pell, you had lived with him  
19 earlier in the presbytery at Ballarat East, hadn't you?  
20 A. Well, yes, I had forgotten that, but the documents  
21 show that he was there at the same time so I accept that.  
22  
23 Q. "At the same time", means that you each had bedrooms  
24 in the presbytery at St Alipius?  
25 A. Yeah, we lived there at St Alipius presbytery.  
26  
27 Q. And that was for about 12 months or so?  
28 A. I don't know, I couldn't tell you that.  
29  
30 Q. The time that you were living together at the  
31 presbytery, you had meals together?  
32 A. Yes, we would have had meals together.  
33  
34 Q. And you would have generally chatted with each other  
35 as you saw each other around the presbytery?  
36 A. Yes, that would be normal.  
37  
38 Q. Was he at any stage your confessor?  
39 A. Not that I know of; I don't think so.  
40  
41 Q. Did you tell George Pell while you were in the  
42 presbytery of the difficulties that you had with adult  
43 relationships?  
44 A. No, I don't think so.  
45  
46 Q. Did you tell him of the difficulties you had since the  
47 seminary with children?

1 A. No, I don't think so.  
2  
3 Q. Coming back to the minutes of the meeting on  
4 14 September 1982, the next Consultor listed is David  
5 Arundell. He was a friend of yours wasn't he?  
6 A. Daniel Arundell; Dan Arundell.  
7  
8 Q. I beg your pardon, Daniel Arundell.  
9 A. Yes, I'd put him among my friends at that time, I'd  
10 say.  
11  
12 Q. You'd known him for some time?  
13 A. Well, we had been together in Mildura, I think it was,  
14 as assistant priests.  
15  
16 Q. And you didn't have many adult friends at that time,  
17 did you?  
18 A. No, not really close friends, no.  
19  
20 Q. But he was one of those close friends that you did  
21 have?  
22 A. No, not - I wouldn't say close, but he was a friend  
23 that - we used to play golf sometimes.  
24  
25 Q. Did you tell Daniel Arundell about your difficulties  
26 in having adult relationships?  
27 A. No, I don't think I would have done that.  
28  
29 Q. Did you tell him about your difficulties with  
30 children?  
31 A. No, certainly not.  
32  
33 Q. Did you talk together --  
34 A. I wouldn't have told anybody.  
35  
36 Q. Did you talk together about issues that you might have  
37 had with celibacy and chastity as priests together.  
38 A. No, I can't remember talking to anybody about that.  
39  
40 Q. The other two members of the Consultors meeting was,  
41 is that J Martin?  
42 A. Yes, John Martin.  
43  
44 Q. Had you worked with him?  
45 A. I don't think I worked with him. I knew John, he was  
46 originally a Ballarat man.  
47

1 Q. And then the last one is E Bryant; who was that?  
2 A. Eric Bryant.  
3  
4 Q. You knew him?  
5 A. I knew Eric, yes.  
6  
7 Q. You hadn't had any discussions with Eric Bryant or  
8 John Martin about what happened at Mortlake?  
9 A. No, I hadn't. I don't think I would have.  
10  
11 Q. You understood that, after the Bishop intervened in  
12 Mortlake, that you had to leave that parish?  
13 A. Yes, I knew that.  
14  
15 Q. The reason you had to leave that parish was because  
16 the Bishop knew that there had been complaints about you  
17 offending against children.  
18 A. Yes, I remember that from yesterday.  
19  
20 Q. If you have a look at the minutes in front of you,  
21 there's a heading, "Staffing", which is about two-thirds of  
22 the way down.  
23 A. Yes.  
24  
25 Q. I'll read for you what's in that paragraph:  
26  
27 *The Bishop advised that it had become*  
28 *necessary for Father Gerald Ridsdale to*  
29 *move from the parish of Mortlake.*  
30 *Negotiations were underway to have him work*  
31 *with the Catholic Inquiry Centre in Sydney.*  
32 *A new appointment to Mortlake will be*  
33 *necessary to take effect after October 17.*  
34  
35 Now, it was the case, wasn't it, that negotiations  
36 were underway at that time for you to work at the Catholic  
37 Enquiry Centre in Sydney?  
38 A. Yes, I did go to the Catholic Enquiry Centre.  
39  
40 Q. And it was also true that, in the Bishop's mind, it  
41 was necessary to move you from Mortlake because of the  
42 complaints made against you?  
43 A. Well, that's logical, yes.  
44  
45 Q. Well, you knew that to be true, didn't you, that that  
46 was what --  
47 A. Yes, that's a reasonable assumption, yes.

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Q. Well, you had discussions with the Bishop?

A. Well, I would have had to have had discussions with the Bishop.

Q. And you had discussions with the Bishop about the complaints that had been made about you to him and to other clergy?

A. Well, as I said yesterday, I can only remember one meeting or discussion with Bishop Mulkearns; I can't remember any discussion about this, about leaving Mortlake, and I can't remember any discussion with him about going to the Catholic Enquiry Centre.

THE CHAIR: Q. Mr Ridsdale, you told us yesterday of your concern that you may be removed from the ministry if the Bishop continued to hear complaints about your activity with children. You told us that, didn't you?

A. Yes, Your Honour.

Q. It would follow that every time the Bishop spoke with you about those issues, you would have been very, very concerned that you may lose your office as a priest, wouldn't you?

A. I should have been, yes.

Q. I'm sorry?

A. Yes, I think I would have been, yes.

Q. It's not a question of thinking you would have been, it must have been the case, having regard to your evidence yesterday, mustn't it?

A. Yes, I would have.

Q. Yes, you would have been virtually terrified that the Bishop was going to say, "That's it, you're out of the church"?

A. Yes, Your Honour.

Q. Yes, and you can remember feeling those great concerns, can't you?

A. Yes, I felt them for a long time.

Q. Yes, but you can remember the occasions when you spoke to the Bishop feeling those concerns, can't you?

A. No, I can't.

1 Q. You can't?  
2 A. It's only that one - no, I can't, Your Honour.  
3  
4 Q. So you tell us that the most important thing in your  
5 life, that is, the prospect of being removed from the  
6 ministry, when the issues were raised with you by the  
7 Bishop, you can't remember that happening?  
8 A. Yes, I can't remember any discussions with the Bishop,  
9 except on one occasion when I --  
10  
11 Q. You understand people think that is just incredible?  
12 A. Yes, I can understand that, Your Honour.  
13  
14 Q. What's your answer to it? Why is it not incredible?  
15 A. My answer is, I can only give you what I've got, I can  
16 only tell you what I can remember.  
17  
18 MS FURNESS: Q. After Mortlake, Bishop Mulkearns sent  
19 you to counselling with Father Augustine Watson, didn't he?  
20 A. Yes, he did.  
21  
22 Q. And you understood Father Augustine Watson to be a  
23 Franciscan Monk?  
24 A. Yes, he was a Franciscan Monk and a psychologist.  
25  
26 Q. Can you turn to tab 107, which is the interview you  
27 had in 1994, page 46 of that interview. You first saw  
28 Father Watson in or about September-October 1982 after you  
29 left Mortlake, didn't you?  
30 A. Well, I can't remember that, but if that's when I  
31 was - I can't remember dates or years but, if that's the  
32 case. I remember going to a Father Augustine Watson.  
33  
34 Q. And you remember going after you left Mortlake?  
35 A. Yes, I don't remember exactly when it was, but it  
36 could have been after I left Mortlake.  
37  
38 Q. You describe, on page 46, the kind of therapy that he  
39 was engaged with you, and you describe it, that he was a  
40 devotee of logotherapy which was a therapy devised by  
41 Viktor Frankl?  
42 A. Yes.  
43  
44 Q. And part of his therapy with you was to do with your  
45 spirituality and your relationship with God?  
46 A. Yes, that would have been part of it.  
47

1 Q. You describe that, and I quote:

2

3 *One of his strongest things [his, being*  
4 *Father Watson] was to stay close to the*  
5 *Lord and respect your priesthood and more*  
6 *spiritual kind of stuff.*

7

8 Do you see that?

9 A. Yes, I can see that now, yes.

10

11 Q. Can you recall now what benefit you received from the  
12 therapy with Father Watson?

13 A. No, I can't, but I did follow up that logotherapy with  
14 Viktor Frankl, and I studied that, and I think the basic  
15 reasoning behind that was, in whatever difficult  
16 circumstances a person is in, if they have some reason for  
17 living, a good reason for living and going on with life,  
18 then that was helpful.

19

20 Q. You say over the page that he got you to the stage  
21 where the number of times you offended dropped away  
22 dramatically. It was the case, wasn't it, that you  
23 offended after you were at Mortlake Parish, didn't you?

24 A. Yes, I did.

25

26 Q. And you offended during the counselling you received  
27 by Father Watson?

28 A. Well, I'm not sure of that, I don't - I wouldn't know  
29 dates or circumstances there; I'm not sure of that.

30

31 Q. Do you recall now seeing Father Watson intermittently  
32 or otherwise between 1982 when you finished at Mortlake and  
33 about 1988 or 1989 when you went overseas for treatment?

34 A. Yes, but I don't know for how long or how many times  
35 it would have been.

36

37 Q. No, but leaving aside --

38 A. But I do - it was Father Augustine Watson that  
39 recommended the treatment centre overseas, because he told  
40 me he had been looking around for some kind of treatment  
41 centres for priests or religious who were in difficulties  
42 and needed treatment, so he went to, I think it was a place  
43 in England to have a look and then a place in the  
44 United States and he decided --

45

46 Q. Mr Ridsdale, when you say "who were in difficulties  
47 and needed treatment", you mean who were sexually abusing



1 children and others, don't you?

2 A. No, not always, because knowing from some of the  
3 people who were in therapy with me, some of them simply had  
4 issues with their vocation, with their priesthood, with  
5 their ministry and deciding whether they should go on or  
6 whether they should drop out, but the majority would have  
7 been priests or religious who had sexual problems with  
8 children or with adults.

9

10 Q. Coming back to your interview which is in front of  
11 you. After the paragraph I've just taken you to, you then  
12 refer to beginning with the Catholic Enquiry Centre where  
13 your job was to answer all the letters and enquiries that  
14 came in from non-Catholics in Sydney and also doing PR  
15 work.

16

17 When you were appointed to the Catholic Enquiry Centre  
18 to do that job, did Bishop Mulkearns impose any conditions  
19 on you as to what work you could do while in Sydney?

20 A. No, none that I can recall him giving me.

21

22 Q. I beg your pardon?

23 A. I can't recall anyone, the Bishop or anyone else  
24 putting any restrictions or limitations or conditions on  
25 what I was doing.

26

27 Q. And by "anyone else" you mean anyone in Sydney or in  
28 Victoria involved with the Catholic Church?

29 A. Anyone in - yes, both.

30

31 Q. You say that part of your work was to get yourself  
32 invited to different parishes and go for a weekend, preach  
33 about the work and take up a special collection. I take  
34 it, you mean by "special collection", money from the  
35 parishioners; is that right?

36 A. Money, yes, that's right.

37

38 Q. Then you arranged to be in Victoria every six weeks or  
39 so to see Father Watson?

40 A. That's right, yes.

41

42 Q. While you were at the Catholic Enquiry Centre and  
43 seeing Father Watson, you offended against children, didn't  
44 you?

45 A. Yes, I did.

46

47 Q. On the next page there's reference to a Charismatic

1 Prayer Group. Did you run a Charismatic Prayer Group in  
2 Sydney?

3 A. No, I didn't run the group, I joined the group. The  
4 group had been existing a long time before I went there.

5

6 Q. Was that group in a particular parish?

7 A. It would have to be located in a parish; whether it  
8 was part of the parish activity or not, I don't think so,  
9 but I can't remember the name of the suburb that it was in.  
10 I was living in Maroubra and I know it wasn't very far from  
11 there.

12

13 Q. Does Yarra Bay mean anything to you?

14 A. Yarra Bay, yes, that's the parish; I don't know  
15 whether that's the suburb, but I think that's the parish it  
16 was in.

17

18 Q. Was that close to the Maroubra Parish where you were  
19 living?

20 A. Well, it was close enough. I would say probably 20  
21 minutes drive, I'm not sure now.

22

23 Q. So, it wasn't adjoining Maroubra Parish?

24 A. No, I don't think so. I'm not sure, Miss, I just  
25 can't remember.

26

27 Q. How did you find out about Yarra Bay Parish and the  
28 Charismatic Prayer Group?

29 A. I don't know.

30

31 Q. Did you look out --

32 A. I don't know how I found that out.

33

34 Q. Were you looking out for a prayer group with children  
35 that you could join?

36 A. No, I would be looking out for a prayer group.

37

38 Q. Well, the prayer group would generally include  
39 children if there were families involved, wouldn't it?

40 A. Yes; not always, but sometimes, yes.

41

42 Q. But your interest would have been in a prayer group  
43 where you had access to children, wouldn't it?

44 A. No, my interest would have been in the prayer group.

45

46 Q. In this particular prayer group, you latched on to a  
47 10 or 11 year-old boy straight away, didn't you?

1 A. That's right, yes.  
2  
3 Q. And you became friendly with the family, you had a  
4 computer and a keyboard that you used because the boy was  
5 interested in keyboards, and you lent him the keyboard,  
6 didn't you?  
7 A. Yes, that's right.  
8  
9 Q. In your words, you wormed your way into his family?  
10 A. Yes, that would be right.  
11  
12 Q. At this time, you were relieving for at least three  
13 weekends at the Parish of Bulli, weren't you?  
14 A. Bulli, I don't remember. I don't remember being in  
15 Bulli at all, but that could be so.  
16  
17 Q. Have a look at the last paragraph before the blacked  
18 out material on page 48 in front of you, Mr Ridsdale.  
19 A. On page 48?  
20  
21 Q. Yes.  
22 A. Yes, those three lines are blacked out.  
23  
24 Q. Leaving aside the blacked out lines, above it says:  
25  
26 *The first time I can remember I was*  
27 *relieving for three consecutive weekends*  
28 *down at the Parish of Bulli.*  
29  
30 You accept that you were at Bulli while you were  
31 working in Sydney  
32 A. Yes, I don't - I didn't remember that but I accept  
33 that now.  
34  
35 Q. You said in 1994 that on three of those - or at least  
36 two of those weekends the boy you met through the  
37 Charismatic Prayer Group stayed with you at Bulli?  
38 A. Yes.  
39  
40 Q. And you offended against him, didn't you?  
41 A. Yes.  
42  
43 Q. How was it that you relieved at Bulli, when you were  
44 sent to Sydney to work at the Catholic Enquiry Centre?  
45 A. I presume that that would have been part of the PR  
46 work and the collecting for the Enquiry Centre; that's the  
47 only reason I can think of why I would have been in Bulli,

1 but I'm not sure why for three consecutive weekends.

2

3 Q. Did you need to get the approval or consent of anyone  
4 to visit a parish that was not your own parish and do work  
5 in that parish?

6 A. I would have had - for any time that I went away from  
7 the Catholic Enquiry Centre, I would have had to have the  
8 permission of the director and the permission of the parish  
9 priest of the parish where I was going for the weekend.

10

11 Q. So, in this case, to go to Bulli you would have had  
12 the approval of Father Fitzpatrick who ran the centre and  
13 the approval of whoever was the parish priest at Bulli?

14 A. Yes, I would have had to have had that.

15

16 Q. Is that approval in writing?

17 A. No, it would have been just verbal with  
18 Father Fitzpatrick and by a phone call from the parish  
19 priest, as far as I know, as far as I remember.

20

21 Q. You made the phone call to the parish priest?

22 A. Well, either that or sometimes the parish priest would  
23 phone the Catholic Enquiry Centre, and often when I would  
24 go or be invited to a parish, the parish priest would  
25 usually occasion to have some time off. So, if I went  
26 there to say the masses and to preach on a weekend, he  
27 would possibly go away for the week before and the week  
28 after, he'd have two weeks holiday.

29

30 Q. Is it the case that the parish priest at Bulli wasn't  
31 there when you were there?

32 A. No, he wouldn't have been there; I would have been  
33 filling in for those three weeks while he was either sick  
34 or away, I would say.

35

36 Q. Was there any other priest working at Bulli when you  
37 were there?

38 A. No, not that I know of.

39

40 Q. You didn't see in the presbytery any other priest?

41 A. No. No, I'm pretty sure there was no one else there,  
42 but I can't remember being there, but most of the parishes  
43 that I went to for weekends, it was only a one man parish  
44 or one priest parish. Bulli, I can't remember, and I don't  
45 know the priest that was there; I can't remember that.

46

47 Q. Can you turn to tab 95 in that volume in front of you.

1 Mr Ridsdale, to orient you to time, you left Mortlake  
2 Parish in about August or September 1982; you started work  
3 at the Catholic Enquiry Centre in November 1982; you were  
4 relieving at Bulli Parish in 1983. Now, you accept those  
5 dates?

6 A. I accept those, yes.

7

8 Q. Looking at the document behind tab 95, it's dated  
9 2 September 1993 and the first paragraph indicates that the  
10 author of the file note, Brian Williamson, contacted the  
11 offices of Cardinal Clancy, and in the company of another,  
12 attend Cardinal Clancy at interview on 2 September 1993.  
13 Then they set out what Cardinal Clancy advised.

14

15 The second paragraph notes that Cardinal Clancy  
16 advised that your initial transfer to Sydney was arranged  
17 between Cardinal Clancy's predecessor, Cardinal Freeman,  
18 and Bishop Mulkearns, and there were mutually agreed  
19 conditions but Cardinal Clancy couldn't recall the exact  
20 details, although when he came to Sydney in April 1983 he  
21 became aware of Father Ridsdale at that time.

22

23 Just turn over to paragraph 12 which is on page 2. In  
24 paragraph 12 he said that, in relation to your supervision,  
25 Bishop Mulkearns told him that you were receiving  
26 counselling and would regularly visit the counsellor, and  
27 that the church at that time had no formal structure for  
28 dealing with paedophilia. However, the mutually agreed  
29 conditions for your transfer to Sydney, Cardinal Clancy  
30 said, was, firstly, that you would work at the Catholic  
31 Enquiry Center; secondly, you would not be in contact with  
32 children; and thirdly, you would continue with counselling.

33

34 Now, were you told that it was a condition of your  
35 working in the Catholic Enquiry Centre that you would not  
36 be in contact with children?

37 A. No. If I was, I can't remember it.

38

39 Q. If you were, you didn't follow it, did you?

40 A. No, I didn't.

41

42 Q. Did you continue with the counselling for the three  
43 years you were in the Catholic Enquiry Centre?

44 A. I think I did; I think I was in contact with Augustine  
45 Watson until I went overseas for treatment, but I don't  
46 know how often, I don't know how many times or how  
47 regularly it would have been.

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Q. Come back to paragraph 3 on the first page.  
Cardinal Clancy is then recorded as advising CCI that at  
the Bishop's conference in Kensington in 1983

Bishop Mulkearns took him, Cardinal Clancy, aside and  
explained that Father Ridsdale has certain sexual problems  
and was under professional treatment. He had come to  
Sydney to get away from the problems in Victoria, and  
Bishop Mulkearns asked whether Cardinal Clancy "would  
continue the arrangements previously agreed with Cardinal  
Freeman, and he indicated that he would subscribe to that  
arrangement as it has been closed for some time and we have  
received no complaints".

Were you told that Bishop Mulkearns had talked to  
Cardinal Clancy about you being in Sydney?

A. No, I don't think I was ever told that.

Q. In paragraph 5 Cardinal Clancy said he forgot about  
the arrangements in the months that followed and, when you  
applied for a parish, it was granted by an auxiliary Bishop  
as Cardinal Clancy was in Rome. What parish did you apply  
for when you were at the Catholic Enquiry Centre?

A. I don't remember applying for any parish in New South  
Wales.

Q. Did you understand that your transfer to the Catholic  
Enquiry Centre permitted you to apply for a parish?

A. No, and I don't think I ever did apply for a parish in  
New South Wales.

Q. Because you understood that the reason for sending you  
out of Victoria, to effectively a desk job in Sydney, was  
to get you away from parishes and access to children,  
didn't you?

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. And, if you worked in a parish while you were in  
Sydney, you were flouting what you understood to be the  
reasons for your transfer?

A. Yes.

Q. Cardinal Clancy then says in paragraph 6 that he  
forgot about you, and then he received a letter from a  
family complaining that you had sexually abused their  
child, and then says that, when that letter arrived, he  
arranged for Father Lucas and Father Usher to see the

1 family.

2

3 While you were in Sydney, did you have any contact  
4 with Father Lucas?

5 A. I don't know. I think Father Lucas was at the  
6 cathedral, and I think I met him when I was at the  
7 cathedral for lunch. That's the only time I think that I  
8 have met Father Lucas; I don't know why I remember him.  
9 Father Usher, I don't remember.

10

11 Q. Did Father Lucas talk to you about sexually offending  
12 against children?

13 A. No, I can't remember ever talking to him, unless it  
14 was at the cathedral when I went for lunch, but I don't  
15 remember that visit.

16

17 Q. Did he talk to you about a complaint having been made  
18 to the Cardinal about your offending against a child?

19 A. No, I can't remember anything of that nature.

20

21 Q. You say you can't remember it; is it the case that it  
22 could have happened and you now don't recall it?

23 A. Yes, it could have happened, yes.

24

25 THE CHAIR: Q. Mr Ridsdale, when you spoke with  
26 Bishop Mulkearns about your sexual offending, do I assume  
27 that you understood, and he understood, that you were both  
28 talking about you having committed criminal offences?

29 A. Yes, Your Honour.

30

31 Q. There can be no doubt about that; you both knew you  
32 were talking about you engaging in criminal activity?

33 A. Yes, Your Honour, yes.

34

35 Q. Had anyone, either Bishop Mulkearns or anyone else in  
36 the church, ever indicate to you that they were going to go  
37 and tell the police about what you had been doing?

38 A. No, I don't think so.

39

40 Q. What about when you were in Sydney? Did anyone talk  
41 to you about your criminal activity in Sydney?

42 A. No, I can't remember, Your Honour, anyone doing that.

43

44 Q. You can't remember anyone ever talking to you about  
45 it?

46 A. No.

47

1 MS FURNESS: Q. Did anyone tell you that they wouldn't  
2 go to the police or wouldn't report you to the police?  
3 A. I'm sorry, I missed that.  
4  
5 Q. Did anyone tell you that they would not go to the  
6 police or would not report you to the police?  
7 A. No, I don't really understand. Would you just repeat  
8 that please, I must have missed something there.  
9  
10 Q. Your Honour asked you whether you were told that you  
11 would be reported to the police, in particular by  
12 Bishop Mulkearns, and you said "no".  
13 A. Yes.  
14  
15 Q. I'm asking you whether - let's limit it for the moment  
16 to Bishop Mulkearns - told you at any time that he would  
17 not report you to the police?  
18 A. Oh. No, I don't think so.  
19  
20 Q. Just turn to tab 64, Mr Ridsdale. When you were at  
21 the Catholic Enquiry Centre in Maroubra, Val Leal was the  
22 secretary at the centre?  
23 A. Yes.  
24  
25 Q. While you were at the centre, you and  
26 Father Fitzpatrick, who was the director, lived there?  
27 A. Yes, that's right, we lived - there were two houses  
28 beside each other, the Catholic Enquiry Centre was one and  
29 Father Fitzpatrick and I lived in the residence beside it.  
30  
31 Q. And you had a housekeeper?  
32 A. Yes, there was a housekeeper there.  
33  
34 Q. While you were there, Father Fitzpatrick travelled a  
35 lot and used to go away for weekends or a few days at a  
36 time preaching in parishes to raise funds?  
37 A. Yes, he also did that.  
38  
39 Q. Did you tell Father Fitzpatrick why you left Victoria  
40 and why you were in Sydney?  
41 A. No, I don't think I ever did that.  
42  
43 Q. Did you know whether Bishop Mulkearns told him that?  
44 A. No, I've got no way of knowing that.  
45  
46 Q. Father Fitzpatrick didn't speak to you about his  
47 knowledge of your problems?



1 A. No, he didn't.

2

3 Q. If you can turn to page 4 of that document. On page 4  
4 Ms Leal describes you as a bit of a loner but that you had  
5 lots of visits from children who you had befriended since  
6 you arrived; that's true, isn't it?

7 A. Yes, I did have children there sometimes.

8

9 Q. And you visited the Maroubra Beach Parish frequently,  
10 didn't you?

11 A. The Maroubra Beach? I don't understand that. We were  
12 living at - Maroubra was the parish where we were. What do  
13 you mean by "visit the parish"?

14

15 Q. Well, there was a Maroubra Beach Parish as well,  
16 wasn't there?

17 A. Next door, yes.

18

19 Q. But that was a separate parish from the parish you  
20 were living in?

21 A. That's right.

22

23 Q. And you visited that parish from time to time, didn't  
24 you?

25 A. I don't think so, I don't know. You mean, visit the  
26 presbytery?

27

28 Q. Yes.

29 A. I don't remember. I could have, but I don't remember.  
30 I don't remember the priest that was there and I don't  
31 remember visiting that parish.

32

33 Q. While you were at the Centre, you had access to  
34 children who were parishioners or whose family members were  
35 parishioners at Maroubra Beach Parish?

36 A. No, I don't think so.

37

38 Q. You had young boys and young girls who visited you at  
39 where you lived at the Catholic Enquiry Centre, didn't you?

40 A. The only time I can remember having children at the  
41 Centre and they stayed overnight were children from outback  
42 New South Wales, from White Cliffs, and I had picked them  
43 up from some sort of a charity house or camp that they were  
44 at for outback children, and then I was going to White  
45 Cliffs the next day for holidays and I was taking them up  
46 there with me.

47

1 Q. And you offended against those children at White  
2 Cliffs, didn't you?  
3 A. Yes, I did.  
4  
5 Q. And you offended against them when they stayed  
6 overnight with you at the Catholic Enquiry Centre?  
7 A. I don't know, I don't think so, but I don't know about  
8 that.  
9  
10 Q. They stayed overnight in your room, didn't they?  
11 A. I don't remember, I don't think so. I think there  
12 were two upstairs bedrooms but I'm not sure. I can't be  
13 sure of that, Miss.  
14  
15 Q. You can't be sure whether you offended against the  
16 children when they stayed overnight with you at the centre?  
17 A. Yes.  
18  
19 Q. But you offended against them when you took them to  
20 White Cliffs?  
21 A. Well, I know I offended against one of them at White  
22 Cliffs.  
23  
24 Q. And the reason you took them to White Cliffs was  
25 because White Cliffs was remote and there was no chance of  
26 anyone seeing you?  
27 A. No, that's where they lived.  
28  
29 Q. But you took them to your house --  
30 A. I was taking them home to their family.  
31  
32 Q. You had a house in White Cliffs, didn't you?  
33 A. Yes, I had an underground house there.  
34  
35 Q. And you abused them in your underground house, didn't  
36 you?  
37 A. No, I didn't abuse them - umm, the boy was the one  
38 that I abused and that could have been in my underground  
39 house, but I can't be sure of that.  
40  
41 Q. Turning to page 9 of the interview with the secretary  
42 which is in front of you. Do you remember who the  
43 assistant priest was at Maroubra between 1982 and 1985 when  
44 you were at the Centre?  
45 A. No. The Maroubra - as far as I can remember now, the  
46 Maroubra presbytery was across the road and I know I used  
47 to go over there sometimes for lunch, over to have a meal

1 with them, but I can't remember the priests' names or who  
2 they were.  
3  
4 Q. Ms Leal said that the assistant priest said to a  
5 member of her staff that he knew very well the activities  
6 of you and was vocal about it. Did the assistant priest at  
7 the Maroubra Parish talk to you about your offending  
8 conduct in Sydney?  
9 A. No, no.  
10  
11 Q. Did it come to your attention --  
12 A. I say "no", but I can't remember that; I don't even  
13 think that happened, it may have happened, I don't think it  
14 happened, but I'm pretty sure he didn't; just let me say  
15 that.  
16  
17 Q. Did it come to your attention by way of rumour or  
18 otherwise that people were becoming aware of your offending  
19 while you were in Sydney?  
20 A. No.  
21  
22 Q. No one said anything to you about suspicions about  
23 your behaviour.  
24 A. No, I don't think so at all.  
25  
26 THE CHAIR: Q. Did anyone approach you to say that there  
27 had been a complaint about you?  
28 A. Did anyone approach me, Your Honour?  
29  
30 Q. Anyone from the church approach you to say that there  
31 had been a complaint about you in Sydney?  
32 A. No, I don't think so.  
33  
34 MS FURNESS: Q. When you began at the Centre, did you  
35 describe the reason that you had come as being that you'd  
36 had a personal breakdown following the untimely death of  
37 your brother?  
38 A. No, I don't remember that, Miss.  
39  
40 Q. Did you have a brother who died around about --  
41 A. Yes, I did.  
42  
43 Q. -- the early 1980s?  
44 A. Yes. I can't remember what year he died. I think he  
45 was 41 years old and he was born in 1935, so whatever that  
46 makes it.  
47

1 Q. If you had said that to the centre staff, it would not  
2 have been true that that was the reason you were away from  
3 the diocese and in the Centre, would it?

4 A. No, it wouldn't have been true.  
5

6 Q. Father Fitzpatrick has also given an account of your  
7 time at the Centre, and if you turn to tab 99 you will see  
8 that's the file note of a conversation with the same person  
9 who spoke with Cardinal Clancy. You will see there in the  
10 second paragraph that Father Fitzpatrick said that  
11 Bishop Mulkearns told him the transfer was as a result of  
12 sexual matters, although details weren't provided.  
13

14 The third paragraph notes that in 1984, this is after  
15 you'd been there for a couple of years, Father Fitzpatrick  
16 had heard a number of things about you which made him  
17 suspicious. Did Father Fitzpatrick share with you his  
18 suspicions a couple of years after you started?

19 A. No, I don't think so.  
20

21 Q. Did you have boys, or girls, sleeping over when  
22 Father Fitzpatrick was in residence at the centre?

23 A. No. I think the only time I can remembering have  
24 anyone sleep over there was that occasion when I had that  
25 boy and the girl to take back home to White Cliffs.  
26

27 Q. Was Father Fitzpatrick there at the time?

28 A. I think so. I think he would have had to have been  
29 there because I was going on holidays the next day and he  
30 would have had to have been in residence.  
31

32 Q. Did Father Fitzpatrick say anything to you about  
33 having a child staying overnight?

34 A. No, I don't think so.  
35

36 Q. You said that the work at the Parish of Bulli was  
37 supply work, in the sense that you were relieving.

38 A. Yes.  
39

40 Q. Was there any other parish you relieved in while you  
41 were at the Centre.

42 A. No, I think it was only weekend work; that was the PR  
43 and the raising the money.  
44

45 Q. Was there an occasion at a school in Campbelltown  
46 where you offended against a child?

47 A. No, I don't - no.

1  
2 Q. Was there a complaint made, to your knowledge, about  
3 your conduct at a school in Campbelltown.  
4 A. No, not that I know of.  
5  
6 Q. Did Father Fitzpatrick supervise you while you were at  
7 the Sydney Centre?  
8 A. In what sense do you mean "supervise"?  
9  
10 Q. In any sense. Did you feel you were under his  
11 supervision?  
12 A. No, only as far as the work was concerned.  
13  
14 Q. The work of the Centre?  
15 A. With the work that I was doing, he left me mainly to  
16 myself and I would confer with him if there was something  
17 in a letter that I needed to clarify from one of the people  
18 that wrote in looking for answers. Sometimes we'd talk  
19 about the Catholic Enquiry Centre program that was being  
20 run, and then there was another program that he wanted to  
21 get off the ground and we talked about that and he asked me  
22 if I would be interested in initiating that program.  
23  
24 Q. You ended up staying an additional time at the Centre  
25 because the Centre asked for your services for an  
26 additional year; do you remember that?  
27 A. No, I don't, but that could be so.  
28  
29 MS FURNESS: Your Honour, the Royal Commission received an  
30 email from Father Fitzpatrick, setting out his further  
31 recollection of his dealings with Father Ridsdale, as he  
32 then was, and I tender that email.  
33  
34 THE CHAIR: Does Mr Ridsdale have a copy of that?  
35  
36 MS FURNESS: Yes, he does, I'm told.  
37  
38 THE CHAIR: Very well, yes.  
39  
40 **EXHIBIT #28-34 EMAIL FROM FATHER FITZPATRICK DATED**  
41 **18/05/2015**  
42  
43 THE CHAIR: Can we just have a second to read it.  
44  
45 MS FURNESS: Certainly.  
46  
47 THE CHAIR: Yes.

1  
2 MS FURNESS: Q. You have that document in front of you,  
3 Mr Ridsdale?  
4 A. Yes, I have.  
5  
6 Q. What Mr Fitzpatrick says in that letter is that he  
7 queried why boys from a parish in Victoria, who were  
8 boarders at school in New South Wales, was being visited by  
9 you. Do you see that in the first paragraph? He queried  
10 you, why boys --  
11 A. Yes, I see that.  
12  
13 Q. -- were being visited by you. Do you remember that  
14 query made by Mr Fitzpatrick?  
15 A. No. No, I don't, but what is there doesn't make sense  
16 to me. "I further queried why the boys from a parish in  
17 Victoria were boarders at a school in New South Wales".  
18  
19 I don't understand that.  
20  
21 Q. Well, what he's saying is that you said that you were  
22 visiting boys boarding there who were sons of former  
23 parishioners, then he was querying why they were boarders  
24 in New South Wales. But nevertheless --  
25 A. I'm sorry, but it doesn't make any sense to me.  
26  
27 Q. Did, then Father Fitzpatrick, talk to you about  
28 visiting boys who were boarding in New South Wales but came  
29 from Victoria?  
30 A. No, I don't think so.  
31  
32 Q. Did Bishop Mulkearns talk to you about that?  
33 A. No.  
34  
35 Q. Was there another occasion where you had a boy staying  
36 overnight other than when you took that boy and his sister  
37 to White Cliffs the following day?  
38 A. Well, yes, the only other one would have been that boy  
39 from the prayer group. He could have stayed there.  
40  
41 Q. And when the boy from the prayer group stayed  
42 overnight, you offended against him, didn't you?  
43 A. Yes, I would have.  
44  
45 Q. Were you recalled soon after that by Bishop Mulkearns?  
46 A. I don't know. Recalled back to Victoria?  
47

1 Q. Yes.

2 A. No, I don't know; I think I went back - came back to  
3 Victoria just when my term had - when I finished at the  
4 Catholic Enquiry Centre, I think I was given a bit more  
5 time to stay in New South Wales, and as far as I remember,  
6 I was approached by another New South Wales Bishop to see  
7 if I was interested in going to a parish where I think the  
8 parish priest was either retiring or was sick, and I was  
9 asked if I would go there, and I think it was for  
10 three months - I might be able to think of the name of the  
11 place if I just have a minute. No, no, I think it was Woy  
12 Woy. The parish at Woy Woy --

13  
14 THE CHAIR: Q. Who was the Bishop of the parish you  
15 mentioned, Mr Ridsdale?

16 A. It would have been the Bishop of - Woy Woy didn't  
17 belong to the Sydney Diocese, I think it belonged to a  
18 diocese called Broken Bay, but I'm not sure of that. They  
19 needed - I think the assistant priest at Woy Woy was  
20 going - might be study leave or something like that, and  
21 they needed another assistant priest to go there. I know I  
22 went --

23  
24 Q. Mr Ridsdale, who was the Bishop who approached you?

25 A. Well, the Bishop of Broken Bay, it would have been,  
26 Your Honour.

27  
28 Q. What was his name?

29 A. I can't remember now.

30  
31 MS FURNESS: Your Honour, perhaps if I can take the  
32 witness to tab 35.

33  
34 Q. Mr Ridsdale, this is the agenda of the College of  
35 Consultors for the Archdiocese of Sydney on 5 March 1986.  
36 You see under B2, "Appointments finalised since the last  
37 meeting", include you as assistant priest at Woy Woy.

38 A. That's from Sydney, is it? I was mistaken, I thought  
39 Woy Woy belonged to a different diocese.

40  
41 Q. Well, I think until May 1986 it was the Archdiocese of  
42 Sydney and, before that, it was the Diocese of Broken Bay.

43 A. Right, oh well.

44  
45 Q. So, your appointment was made with the consent of the  
46 College of Consultors. Does that assist you to understand  
47 which Bishop it was that you say approached you?

1 A. No. I did spend - I think I'm confused here - I did  
2 spend another two or three months --

3  
4 Q. In Forestville. You spent some time in Forestville.  
5 A. Forestville, at Forestville, and I think that belonged  
6 to Broken Bay, did it?

7  
8 Q. Turn to the next tab, Mr Ridsdale, 36. This is  
9 meetings at the College of Consultors on 5 March 1986, so  
10 that's the minutes that relate to the agenda I just took  
11 you to, and you will see present at that meeting is  
12 Bishop Cremin, Bishop Murphy, Bishop Heather, Bishop Heaps,  
13 Bishop Robinson, and two reverends. Now, wish of those  
14 Bishops spoke to you about either Woy Woy or Forestville?

15 A. I don't recognise any of the names; I don't remember  
16 who it was. You see, it mightn't have even been the  
17 Bishop, it might have been the Bishop's secretary. I can't  
18 remember, Miss.

19  
20 Q. Turn to page 3 of that document. At the bottom of  
21 that page, the last entry refers to you being appointed as  
22 an administrator at Forestville from 1 April 1986.

23 A. That's right, yes.

24  
25 Q. If we can go back for a moment to the Catholic  
26 Education Centre. Now, if you can turn to tab 28. I asked  
27 you before, Mr Ridsdale, about your time at the Centre  
28 being extended for a year or so.

29 A. Yes.

30  
31 Q. What's behind tab 28 is a letter from Bishop Mulkearns  
32 to Father Fitzpatrick in September 1984 in response to  
33 Father Fitzpatrick's request that you be asked to stay a  
34 further year.

35  
36 Halfway in that second paragraph Bishop Mulkearns  
37 says:

38  
39 *I am prepared to allow him to continue with*  
40 *the Centre in 1985 provided that this fits*  
41 *in with your own plans. I might add that I*  
42 *had a good discussion with him about the*  
43 *problem that arose earlier in the year and*  
44 *of which we spoke prior to your departure*  
45 *for overseas. He was quite open about the*  
46 *situation and said that he has discussed it*  
47 *with a Melbourne priest who is advising him*



1                   and certainly hopes that it's not something  
2                   which will crop up again.

3  
4                   That's a reference to your sexual offending against  
5 children, isn't it, Mr Ridsdale?

6                   A.    Yes, I presume it is.

7  
8                   Q.    Bishop Mulkearns spoke to you earlier in 1984 about  
9 your offending, didn't he?

10                  A.    Yes.

11  
12                  Q.    And you were at that time being counselled by  
13 Father Watson, who was a Melbourne priest?

14                  A.    Yes.

15  
16                  Q.    And you were open with Bishop Mulkearns about your  
17 offending and your counselling with Father Watson?

18                  A.    Yes, I would have been.

19  
20                  Q.    Turn over to tab 30. This is a further letter from  
21 Bishop Mulkearns to Father Fitzpatrick dated December 1985,  
22 so a year or so later. In this letter Bishop Mulkearns is  
23 writing to Father Fitzpatrick to tell him that he spoke to  
24 you about his plans for next year, and saying that he, that  
25 is Bishop Mulkearns, spoke to you after making contact with  
26 Father Augustine Watson and talking to Bishop Heaps and  
27 Archbishop Clancy about the possibility of you helping out  
28 in one or more parishes close to the Centre and that they  
29 both were happy to approve this plan.

30  
31                  Now, that predates your being appointed to Woy Woy and  
32 Forestville, doesn't it?

33                  A.    Right, yes.

34  
35                  Q.    Does it help you to remember whether or not it was  
36 Bishop Heaps who spoke to you about the appointment to Woy  
37 Woy or Forestville?

38                  A.    I can't remember Bishop Heaps, but it seems like that  
39 is the case, that Bishop Heaps must have been - I think  
40 what they call an auxiliary Bishop or a Bishop in charge of  
41 a certain region of the diocese, and Woy Woy must have come  
42 under his jurisdiction, so yes, it could have been Bishop  
43 Heaps; I don't remember. I don't remember talking with  
44 Bishop Heaps.

45  
46                  Q.    Turn to tab 31 and this is another College  
47 of Consultors meeting for the Archdiocese of Sydney. You

1 can see there that those present were similar to the other  
2 document I took you to: Archbishop Clancy, Bishop Cremin,  
3 Bishop Murphy, Bishop Heather, Bishop Heaps and  
4 Bishop Robinson. Bishop Murphy, I understand, became the  
5 inaugural Bishop of Broken Bay. Was it Bishop Murphy that  
6 you spoke to?

7 A. I can't remember. I don't know, I don't think I know  
8 Bishop Murphy, I don't think I've ever met him. I sort of  
9 can't place him. But sometimes in dealing with Bishops, we  
10 deal with - used to deal with their secretaries, the priest  
11 who was the Bishop's secretary. I don't know whether I've  
12 ever met Bishop Murphy or not.

13  
14 Q. At this meeting where Archbishop Clancy was present,  
15 mention was made on page 3 at the top of that page of your  
16 availability during 1986 to work in the diocese. What is  
17 noted is that you could possibly help at Narraweena until a  
18 new pastor is appointed. You didn't ultimately work at  
19 Narraweena, did you?

20 A. No, I don't think so, I don't remember that.

21  
22 Q. You worked at Woy Woy and Forestville?

23 A. Yes, they're two that I do remember.

24  
25 Q. After Woy Woy and Forestville, you went back to  
26 Ballarat, didn't you?

27 A. Yes.

28  
29 Q. If you can turn to tab 34, these are the minutes of  
30 the Consultors meeting within the Diocese of Ballarat  
31 in January 1986. You can see at that meeting were the same  
32 Consultors who were present when you were, or similar, when  
33 you were moved from Mortlake and to Sydney?

34 A. Yes, some of them are the same, yes.

35  
36 Q. Bishop Mulkearns, Monsignor Nolan and  
37 Monsignor Fiscalini all knew of your offending at Mortlake,  
38 didn't they?

39 A. Yes.

40  
41 Q. And Father D Arundell was your friend; that's right?

42 A. Yes, he was a friend of mine.

43  
44 Q. And Father Brian Finnigan also knew of your offending  
45 at Mortlake, didn't he?

46 A. I don't know. I have no way of knowing whether he  
47 knew or not.

1  
2 Q. You understand from documents I took you to yesterday  
3 that they referred to a complaint, or one or more  
4 complaints, being referred to Father Finnigan about your  
5 conduct; you remember those documents?  
6 A. No, I can't remember that reference.  
7  
8 Q. Coming back to these minutes. There's a reference at  
9 the bottom of the page to you being an assistant priest at  
10 Horsham from July. Do you see that?  
11 A. After July?  
12  
13 Q. Yes. So, another --  
14 A. Yes, I do.  
15  
16 Q. -- was there up till July and then you.  
17 A. Yes, I see that.  
18  
19 Q. That was a demotion, wasn't it, from the parish priest  
20 position you held before you left Ballarat to assistant  
21 priest?  
22 A. Yes.  
23  
24 Q. Why were you demoted?  
25 A. Well, if I remember rightly, when I was coming back to  
26 Victoria, as far as I remember I asked - the parish priest  
27 at Horsham had been a good friend of mine, Father Frank  
28 Madden, and I asked if, when I came back to Victoria, that  
29 I could be placed with Father Madden as his assistant in  
30 Horsham. I mean, at that stage of my life, being parish  
31 priest or being assistant priest didn't matter, so talking  
32 of demotion is just not right, you know, it's irrelevant.  
33 But I think this is what I asked for because I would like  
34 to work with Father Frank Madden.  
35  
36 Q. Did you understand him to be supervising you and  
37 monitoring your progress in relation to offending against  
38 children?  
39 A. Well, I didn't know that, but that could be the case.  
40  
41 Q. You offended in Horsham, didn't you?  
42 A. I don't know whether we ever talked about it.  
43  
44 Q. You offended in Horsham, didn't you, Mr Ridsdale?  
45 A. During that time, I don't think so.  
46  
47 Q. I'll take you to some details of your offending in a

1 moment, but before you were appointed to Horsham, did you  
2 speak with Father Watson, your counsellor, about the  
3 desirability of you being placed back in a parish?  
4 A. No, I can't remember whether I did or not.  
5  
6 Q. Did Father Watson indicate to you his view about  
7 whether you should be placed in a parish?  
8 A. No, I don't know whether I had any discussion with him  
9 about going into a parish or not.  
10  
11 Q. Do you know whether Father Watson had a discussion  
12 with Bishop Mulkearns about whether or not you should be  
13 put back in a parish?  
14 A. No, I've got no way of knowing that.  
15  
16 Q. Did you understand that Father Watson's say so was  
17 necessary for you to be put in any parish after Mortlake?  
18 A. No, but I can see that he would be consulted.  
19  
20 Q. You would expect him to be consulted? Is that what  
21 you say?  
22 A. I would think so. I would think so.  
23  
24 Q. He didn't talk to you, that is Father Watson, about  
25 the occasions on which Bishop Mulkearns sought his view?  
26 A. No, I can't remember him doing that.  
27  
28 Q. Coming back to your interview, which is again at  
29 tab 107, Mr Ridsdale. If you can turn to page 50. You're  
30 referring here to going back to Horsham with Father Madden,  
31 who was a friend of yours, as his assistant.  
32 A. Yes.  
33  
34 Q. You refer there to two boys against whom you offended.  
35 A. Just two.  
36  
37 Q. You say just two.  
38 A. I see that there, yes.  
39  
40 Q. So it's the case, isn't it, that you offended while  
41 you were at Horsham as assistant priest?  
42 A. Yes. I didn't think that I had, but it looks like  
43 that I did.  
44  
45 Q. When you say "it looks like you did", you told CCI in  
46 1994 you did, didn't you?  
47 A. Yes. That's what I'm saying, according to the

1 document it looks like I did. I thought that I hadn't  
2 offended in Horsham in that time.  
3  
4 Q. You were in Horsham between 1986 and 1988, weren't  
5 you?  
6 A. Right.  
7  
8 Q. And you had been under counselling since about 1982 by  
9 Father Watson, hadn't you?  
10 A. Right.  
11  
12 Q. The counselling wasn't working, was it?  
13 A. Well, no, it wasn't.  
14  
15 Q. Did you tell Bishop Mulkearns that the counselling  
16 wasn't working?  
17 A. No.  
18  
19 Q. Did you tell Father Watson that the counselling wasn't  
20 working?  
21 A. I don't think so, I'm not sure.  
22  
23 Q. Or you might have told him?  
24 A. I'm not sure, Miss.  
25  
26 Q. You're not sure one way or the other whether you told  
27 him?  
28 A. Yes, that's right.  
29  
30 Q. Did you try and find any other form of treatment or  
31 counselling during that time?  
32 A. No, I don't think so.  
33  
34 Q. Complaints started to be made about your conduct at  
35 around this time, isn't that right?  
36 A. Complaints about where? You'd have to be more  
37 specific than that, I'm not sure what you're referring to.  
38  
39 Q. You're not sure because you offended in so many  
40 locations, Mr Ridsdale, that you need to know the specific  
41 location to understand; is that right?  
42 A. No, I'm just not sure of what your question was, if  
43 you can perhaps put the question again.  
44  
45 Q. Complaints started to be made about your conduct at  
46 around this time, isn't that right?  
47 A. Complaints from parishes where I'd been?

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Q. Yes, and complaints from parents of children you'd sexually abused?

A. Well, yes, we went through those complaints yesterday; there were complaints.

Q. But they were made in greater number after you were appointed to Horsham, not necessarily about your conduct in Horsham, but at that point in time.

A. Well, yes, that could be so.

Q. Weren't complaints brought to your attention?

A. Not in Horsham. I don't think so.

Q. Have a look at tab 39. This is in August 1987, while you were at Horsham, and this is the letter that's been written to Bishop Mulkearns by a parent. In this letter it refers to the author of the letter having told a Father, whose name I can't quite work out. See on the third line, "given to you by Father Brian"?

A. No, I'm not sure what that is. Looked a bit like "Desmond" but I don't think it is.

Q. McDermott, does that sound familiar to you?

A. It could be McDermott. There was a Father McDermott.

Q. This letter thanks Bishop Mulkearns for his message that you had been spoken to by Bishop Mulkearns about the complaint by the author of this letter and that she had asked for you to be removed from all control with young boys. Did Bishop Mulkearns talk to you about this in about August 1987?

A. No, I can't remember. At this time I can't remember him talking to me, but that could be so but I can't remember.

Q. But it was the case, wasn't it, that you remained at Horsham until May 1988, some nine months or so after this letter was written?

A. Right.

Q. You don't now recall Bishop Mulkearns saying to you in about August 1987, "You've got to no longer have contact with young boys because of complaints I'm receiving". He didn't say that?

A. No, I don't. No, I don't remember that.

1 Q. Father Madden has also been interviewed by the  
2 insurers and their lawyers, and he said at tab 86, if you  
3 could turn there, that you were there from July 1986  
4 until May 1988, and that he said he knew you had been in  
5 some sort of trouble but wasn't told what had occurred and  
6 didn't really want to know. Did he ask you what trouble  
7 you'd been in?  
8 A. No, I don't think so.  
9  
10 Q. Did you tell him what sort of trouble you'd been in?  
11 A. No, I wouldn't have told him that.  
12  
13 Q. Why not, if you were there because you wanted his help  
14 and he was somebody you knew well?  
15 A. I don't know.  
16  
17 Q. Are you sure you didn't tell him?  
18 A. No, I'm not sure that I didn't tell him, but I think  
19 it's part of the, just keep quiet about it all and not tell  
20 anybody and hope that there's nobody knows, that there's no  
21 repercussions; it's all that secrecy aspect of offending.  
22  
23 Q. Father Madden continues to say that a particular  
24 complaint came to his attention after you had left Horsham,  
25 and it's referenced to a family who learned that their son  
26 had been molested and then you were transferred from  
27 Horsham as a result of that complaint. Do you see that's  
28 what Father Madden says?  
29 A. Are we still on that one page, the first page?  
30  
31 Q. Turn to the third page. It starts on the first  
32 page and continues over to the third page.  
33 A. Down the bottom?  
34  
35 Q. Do you see that Father Madden is saying you were  
36 transferred from Horsham because of a complaint that was  
37 made about you, in this language, "molesting a boy". Now,  
38 that's what happened, isn't it?  
39 A. Yeah, transferred from Horsham, what, are we talking  
40 about the time that I was there with Frank Madden, are we?  
41  
42 Q. Yes, this is Frank Madden saying this.  
43 A. But I was transferred - I kind of don't understand,  
44 I'm a bit confused, I think.  
45  
46 Q. Well, let me help you, Mr Ridsdale. You abused a boy,  
47 the parents came, complained that you had abused the boy

1 and you were taken out of yet another parish. Does that  
2 help?

3 A. No, it doesn't.

4

5 Q. Shortly after, you ceased to be an assistant priest at  
6 Horsham, didn't you, in May 1988?

7 A. Yes, I think that was when I left parish work  
8 altogether.

9

10 Q. And you left parish work because of a string of  
11 complaints that you had been offending against children for  
12 in fact decades?

13 A. Yes.

14

15 MS FURNESS: Is that an appropriate time, Your Honour?

16

17 THE CHAIR: Yes. We'll take the morning adjournment.

18

19 **SHORT ADJOURNMENT**

20

21 THE CHAIR: Q. Mr Ridsdale, just before Ms Furness  
22 continues, I want to ask you this: during your life in the  
23 church and offending, did you tell lies about your conduct  
24 to people who asked you about it?

25 A. Well, I don't remember anybody asking me about it but,  
26 if they had, I certainly would have told lies about it or  
27 minimised what I was doing.

28

29 Q. Are you familiar with the principle of mental  
30 reservation?

31 A. The principle of what, Your Honour?

32

33 Q. Mental reservation?

34 A. I can't really remember what it - I think it - I think  
35 it was something we used to talk about in priesthood, but I  
36 can't remember what it is now.

37

38 Q. You used to talk about it, did you?

39 A. I think it was part of - it's an expression that I  
40 know from the past but I can't think what it is.

41

42 Q. Do you remember that it might have something to do  
43 with justifying you not telling the whole truth when asked  
44 a question?

45 A. No, I didn't know that.

46

47 Q. What do you remember the principles of mental



1 reservation being?  
2 A. I don't know. I remember the term, but I can't  
3 remember what it was about.  
4  
5 Q. Answer this for me: you spoke with me in a private  
6 hearing some weeks ago, didn't you?  
7 A. Yes, in Ararat when we had the private closed hearing.  
8  
9 Q. Had you spoken to anyone about the evidence you might  
10 give in that hearing before you came to that private  
11 hearing?  
12 A. No, I've spoken to no one about it. I was told not  
13 to.  
14  
15 Q. Since that private hearing, have you spoken to anyone  
16 about the evidence you might give in this public hearing?  
17 A. No. Again, I was told not to say anything about it.  
18  
19 Q. Have you had any phone calls with anyone when you  
20 might have discussed the evidence?  
21 A. No.  
22  
23 Q. Not at all?  
24 A. No, I haven't.  
25  
26 Q. Do you have people who make phone calls to you in the  
27 gaol?  
28 A. No, no one can make a phone call to me, I have to  
29 phone out.  
30  
31 Q. Do you have people who you regularly phone out?  
32 A. The one I would phone most regularly would be one of  
33 my sisters.  
34  
35 Q. Who else do you phone out to?  
36 A. Occasionally I phone Father Brendan Davey.  
37  
38 Q. Yes.  
39 A. And my solicitor, Michael de Young, when I have to.  
40 There's a Father Pat Kinnard in New South Wales that I  
41 might phone about every three or four months. My sister,  
42 [REDACTED].  
43  
44 Q. Since the private hearing, when you spoke with me in  
45 the private hearing, have you had visitors in the gaol?  
46 A. I forget what date - was that - could you remind me  
47 how long ago that was, Your Honour, please?

1  
2 Q. Do we know exactly?  
3 A. Would it be two months?  
4  
5 Q. It would be in March some time.  
6  
7 MS FURNESS: 17 March.  
8  
9 THE CHAIR: Q. 17 March. Have you had any visitors in  
10 the gaol since then.  
11 A. I think the only visitor I've had since then would be  
12 a Father John McKinnon.  
13  
14 Q. Anyone else?  
15 A. No. I don't know whether my sister, [REDACTED], was here  
16 in that time; I don't think so. She was due to come last  
17 weekend but we put it off.  
18  
19 Q. Where does Father John McKinnon come from?  
20 A. He's retired, he lives in Hamilton.  
21  
22 THE CHAIR: Yes, Ms Furness.  
23  
24 MS FURNESS: Thank you, Your Honour.  
25  
26 THE CHAIR: By the way, you'll appreciate there will be a  
27 record of the people who have been to see you in gaol,  
28 don't you?  
29 A. Yes, and also the people that I've phoned.  
30  
31 MS FURNESS: Q. Mr Ridsdale, before the adjournment you  
32 had given evidence about leaving Horsham Parish. You then  
33 wrote to Bishop Mulkearns, standing down from parish work.  
34 If you turn to tab 43 you will see your letter. You begin,  
35 in this letter dated 11 April 1988, with:  
36  
37 *Following our discussion last Monday I wish*  
38 *to confirm in writing the matter of our*  
39 *discussion. I confirm my request to step*  
40 *down from parish work in this diocese so*  
41 *that I may be removed from the kind of work*  
42 *that has proved to be a temptation and a*  
43 *difficulty for me.*  
44  
45 Mr Ridsdale, were you told to step down or did you  
46 decide to step down?  
47 A. I don't remember.

1  
2 Q. You don't remember whether --  
3 A. Whether I was told or whether I --  
4  
5 Q. Mr Ridsdale, listen to me. You don't remember whether  
6 stepping down as a priest doing parish work, in an area  
7 where you have always wanted to work, was done at your  
8 instigation or the Bishop's; is that what you're saying?  
9 A. Yes, I am saying that. But it could have been at the  
10 direction of the Bishop or a suggestion of the Bishop, I  
11 just don't know, Miss.  
12  
13 Q. When you say "the kind of work that has proved to be a  
14 temptation and a difficulty for me", you are talking about  
15 sexual abuse of children, aren't you?  
16 A. I would be, yes.  
17  
18 Q. You then indicated that you would be taking extended  
19 leave, and that's leave from what?  
20 A. Extended leave from parish work.  
21  
22 Q. So you're not stepping down, in this letter, for only  
23 a period of time; you're stepping down only on the basis  
24 that it's extended leave. Extended leave suggests that  
25 you're remaining in the position, Mr Ridsdale, and just  
26 taking a bit of a break. Is that what you intended?  
27 A. Yes, it does suggest that, but I think now it would  
28 have been that I'd be making a complete break with working  
29 as a priest.  
30  
31 Q. Although you didn't say that in the letter, did you?  
32 A. No.  
33  
34 Q. After you stepped down from parish work, you went to  
35 live at White Cliffs, didn't you?  
36 A. Yes, that's right.  
37  
38 Q. While you were at White Cliffs you offended against a  
39 child?  
40 A. I can't - no, I can't think of anyone that I did.  
41  
42 Q. There was a family that you met and became friendly  
43 with, and that family don't know that you abused their son  
44 and they have visited you in gaol over the 20-odd years  
45 you've been in gaol. Does that help you recall that abuse?  
46 A. No, it doesn't.  
47

1 Q. You were at White Cliffs for some 18 months?  
2 A. Yes, about that.  
3  
4 Q. And then, in June 1988, Bishop Mulkearns withdrew your  
5 priestly faculties for 12 months?  
6 A. Right.  
7  
8 Q. And you willingly accepted that?  
9 A. Yes.  
10  
11 Q. And part of having your faculties withdrawn meant that  
12 you couldn't be involved with public celebration, however  
13 you were permitted to wear the priesthood uniform; isn't  
14 that right?  
15 A. I don't remember that, and that doesn't make sense in  
16 one way.  
17  
18 Q. It doesn't make sense that --  
19 A. Being removed - I just can't understand what that  
20 means.  
21  
22 Q. Did you continue to wear the priestly uniform after  
23 the suspension of your priestly faculties in June 1988?  
24 A. Is that when I went to White Cliffs or after White  
25 Cliffs?  
26  
27 Q. After White Cliffs.  
28 A. No, I don't think I would have.  
29  
30 Q. You don't think you would have worn your priestly  
31 garb?  
32 A. No, I don't think so.  
33  
34 Q. After your priestly faculties were withdrawn for  
35 12 months, you had various discussions with the Bishop  
36 about treatment, didn't you?  
37 A. I don't know.  
38  
39 Q. You ended up going to New Mexico to live with the  
40 Servants of the Paraclete to receive treatment in relation  
41 to your sexual offending against children, didn't you?  
42 A. Yes, that was at Father Augustine Watson's suggestion  
43 and his instigation. Yes, you're right, I would have had  
44 to have discussed it with the Bishop, certainly.  
45  
46 Q. And the diocese paid for that treatment, didn't they?  
47 A. Yes.

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Q. Was your expectation that, following that treatment, you would have a position as a parish priest again?

A. I wouldn't have thought so.

Q. Would you expect to work in the diocese in some capacity after the treatment?

A. Well, I don't know what would have been possible after the treatment; sometimes it's possible to work as a priest, as a chaplain, in an old person's home, or say a retired nun's home or some sort of work like that, where it wasn't really parish work, working in the parish.

Q. Did Bishop Mulkearns give you to understand that there would be a job waiting for you in the church after the treatment was completed?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. Just have a look at the letter behind tab 60. This is a letter that the Bishop wrote to the director of the treatment centre in October 1989 in response to his requests that you be admitted.

In the second paragraph Bishop Mulkearns said that he'd made it clear to you that it's unlikely that it would be possible for you to work in the diocese, that is, the Diocese of Ballarat, in the future should you be deemed able to work in the priestly ministry at all and that you accepted that fact?

A. Yes.

Q. He then continued, and I quote:

*I have not yet made any enquiries from other Bishops as I was waiting for some recommendation after his time at the treatment centre. However, I will take the opportunity, at the meeting of the Australian Catholic Bishops, to take place in late November, early December [this is 1989] to sound out the possibility of someone placing him in the event that it is deemed prudent to do so.*

Now, did you understand that that was the Bishop's thinking before you went away?

A. No, I wasn't privy to that information.

1  
2 Q. Thank you. You travelled to New Mexico for treatment?  
3 A. Yes.  
4  
5 Q. And you were there for some five months or so; is that  
6 right?  
7 A. No, I think it was about eight months.  
8  
9 Q. There's a report of your progress at that treatment  
10 centre behind tab 65. This is dated 9 February 1990 and in  
11 the treatment centre providing Bishop Mulkearns with  
12 evaluation and therapy reports about you.  
13 A. Yes.  
14  
15 Q. It describes you as cooperative and aware of the  
16 seriousness of your situation, in terms of being able to  
17 change the course of previous behaviour and to eventually  
18 return to some form of ministry.  
19  
20 Then it indicates that you'd signed the necessary  
21 release form for reports to be sent to Bishop Mulkearns on  
22 the condition that they are not given to another person  
23 without your express permission and that they be destroyed  
24 or returned to the Centre when Bishop Mulkearns had  
25 finished reading them.  
26  
27 Did it come from you that those reports would only be  
28 provided to Bishop Mulkearns on the condition that they're  
29 not given to anyone else?  
30 A. No, I didn't know about that condition.  
31  
32 Q. Did the treatment centre --  
33 A. Sorry, I knew reports were to be sent regularly to the  
34 Bishop, but I didn't know that there was any condition  
35 about them being shared or kept.  
36  
37 Q. You didn't say to the treatment centre, "You can only  
38 send these reports on as long as they're destroyed or not  
39 given to anyone else"?  
40 A. No. No, I wouldn't have said that.  
41  
42 Q. And you didn't know that the treatment centre was  
43 saying that to Bishop Mulkearns?  
44 A. No, I didn't.  
45  
46 Q. During your time at the --  
47

1 THE CHAIR: Q. Did you have any idea that the Servants  
2 of the Paraclete were concerned that, in communicating any  
3 information about you, they may be communicating matters  
4 which might prejudice your legal position or prejudice the  
5 legal position of the diocese?

6 A. No, I wasn't aware of anything like that, Your Honour.  
7

8 MS FURNESS: Q. If you turn to tab 73. This is another  
9 letter from Bishop Mulkearns, this time to Father Watson  
10 in May 1990. It followed a discussion between the two as  
11 to what work you could do in the future. Bishop Mulkearns  
12 said that "in practice, in the light of the threat of  
13 litigation, I wonder how reasonable it would be to ask a  
14 Bishop to give even such a job" as was described by  
15 Father Watson to you. Then he says:  
16

17 *I will in fact be meeting for a week with a*  
18 *group of 15 or 16 Bishops and will try to*  
19 *explore possibilities there.*  
20

21 You see the reference to "threat of litigation" in  
22 that letter?

23 A. Yes.  
24

25 Q. Did Bishop Mulkearns speak to you about the prospect  
26 of litigation being taken against the diocese because of  
27 your conduct.

28 A. No, I don't think so.  
29

30 Q. Did he talk to you about destroying reports about your  
31 therapy so as to not assist any litigation against the  
32 diocese because of your conduct?

33 A. No.  
34

35 Q. Professor Ball provided a report for you in your court  
36 proceedings. I asked you about that yesterday,  
37 Mr Ridsdale; you remember that?

38 A. Yes.  
39

40 Q. You saw him on three occasions in May 1993.

41 A. Yes.  
42

43 Q. He made some observations about the treatment you had  
44 received from Father Watson and from the Centre in New  
45 Mexico, and that's behind tab 89, if you can have a look at  
46 that, page 4. You see at the paragraph beginning, "I have  
47 some concerns", Professor Ball expresses concerns about the

1 steps that you took to seek help, and says that either you  
2 told very little of the truth and probably less than you  
3 claim or one might wonder about the relationship with your  
4 primary therapist, Father Watson, and his Bishop.

5 A. Excuse me, I just got lost there. I'll have to read  
6 that, start reading that bit again, I got lost, distracted.

7 "Some concerns about the steps he took to ..." Yes, yes.

8

9 Q. It's the case, isn't it, that you generally told  
10 Father Watson the truth about what you had done and what  
11 your thoughts were about children?

12 A. I thought I would have talked honestly to him.

13

14 Q. He refers to the help that you received from  
15 Father Watson having decreased but in no way eliminated  
16 your behaviour. You'd accept that, wouldn't you?

17 A. I did, and I do think it did decrease, the frequency  
18 of offending.

19

20 Q. But not eliminated?

21 A. No, no.

22

23 Q. Professor Ball then goes on to express opinions about  
24 the nature of the help and that it was entirely within the  
25 confines of the church; that is, you saw initially a Father  
26 Evans and then a Father Watson and the treatment facility  
27 in New Mexico had a spiritual component.

28

29 Now, did you think of seeking help from outside the  
30 church?

31 A. No.

32

33 Q. Did anyone suggest to you that you should seek --

34 A. No, I didn't seek any help from outside the church.

35

36 Q. Did Father Watson or Father Evans suggest you seek  
37 help from outside the church.

38 A. No, I don't think so; not that I can remember, but I'm  
39 pretty sure that they didn't.

40

41 Q. Did Bishop Mulkearns suggest you seek help from  
42 outside the church?

43 A. No, I don't think so; I don't think anyone has ever  
44 said that to me.

45

46 Q. He refers at the bottom of that page, that there is  
47 some disquiet - and this letter is written in 1993 - about



1 the particular unit where you were treated, that's the new  
2 Mexico facility, and he says and I quote:

3  
4 *As you probably already learned, the unit*  
5 *has either closed up or markedly reduced in*  
6 *activity and itself is under litigation, in*  
7 *part because of accusations and claims for*  
8 *damages in relation to the abnormal sexual*  
9 *behaviour of someone who was in there at*  
10 *the same time as Father Ridsdale who was*  
11 *going out and regularly offending.*

12  
13 Now, were you aware of that at the time you were at  
14 the treatment centre?

15 A. No, I wasn't aware of it then; I was aware of it later  
16 on, and it was - I thought it was someone who was there  
17 after I'd left, but what my understanding is, that one of  
18 the priests who were there for treatment was given the  
19 opportunity by, I think it was the Bishop of that diocese  
20 but I'm not sure, of doing some weekend ministry in his  
21 diocese, and I think while he was doing that he was  
22 offending.

23  
24 Q. When you say "offending", he was sexually assaulting  
25 children?

26 A. Yes, sexually - that's right, yes.

27  
28 Q. Was there any other person there when you were there  
29 who you were aware of from your own knowledge or from  
30 rumour, that they were sexually offending while at the  
31 treatment centre?

32 A. No, there wasn't.

33  
34 Q. When you came home from the treatment centre, you  
35 stayed with your parents in Ballarat for a while?

36 A. Yes. I did, yes.

37  
38 Q. And you spent a bit of time with your friend,  
39 Father Brendan Davey, didn't you?

40 A. Yes.

41  
42 Q. Did you, at this time, seek advice from the Bishop of  
43 Parramatta, Bede Heather, at the time about finding a  
44 counsellor?

45 A. No, you've skipped something there. I went - and I'm  
46 not sure how I got the job, or the position, but the  
47 St John of God Brothers had a hospital and a treatment

1 facility for people with mental difficulties and drug and  
2 alcohol problems in North Richmond which was in the Diocese  
3 of Parramatta. And I went up to be interviewed to see if -  
4 I think what they were looking for was someone who would be  
5 available for masses, to say mass in the chapel for the  
6 patients and to be, not quite on the staff, but someone who  
7 was around to talk to the patients, to listen to the  
8 patients, to be with them, to sit in on some of the drug  
9 and alcohol therapy sessions, that kind of thing.

10

11 So I went up and I talked to the Brother who was in  
12 charge of - and I can't give his name - and he, I think  
13 straight away said, "Yes, we'll take you on", and I went  
14 back to - came back to Victoria and packed up what I needed  
15 and I moved up there and I lived in with the Brothers.  
16 Where Bishop Bede Heather comes into it, because it was in  
17 his diocese, I went into Parramatta, it was more a courtesy  
18 call than anything else, to go and let him know that I was  
19 there and that I was living with the St John of God  
20 Brothers.

21

22 Q. Did you ask him to give you the name of a counsellor  
23 to help you with your problem of offending against  
24 children?

25 A. Yes, I asked him if there was someone he could  
26 recommend that I could continue treatment with or some kind  
27 of therapy, and he gave me the name of someone, Peter was  
28 his first name, a priest who was living and consulting from  
29 a house in - not Blackburn, umm --

30

31 Q. Just stop there for a moment.

32 A. One of the suburbs, yes.

33

34 Q. The Bishop of Parramatta knew about your history of  
35 offending against children?

36 A. I don't know whether he did or not.

37

38 Q. Did you tell him?

39 A. No, I don't think I did.

40

41 Q. What did you tell him you wanted counselling for?

42 A. Because I'd been over to New Mexico and two of the  
43 requirements that they make of people who have been through  
44 therapy is to keep in touch with the therapists and the  
45 staff at the --

46

47 Q. Let me stop you there, Mr Ridsdale. You told the

1 Catholic Church Insurance in 1994 that at the end of the  
2 program - this is at St John of God - the Bishop came over  
3 and there was an evaluation session on what the problem  
4 was?

5 A. You mean in New Mexico?

6  
7 Q. Did that happen in New Mexico or did that happen in  
8 St John of God?

9 A. No, in New Mexico.

10  
11 Q. But New Mexico told you, the treatment program told  
12 you, that what you had to do was own up about your conduct  
13 and seek regular assistance in the form of counselling;  
14 isn't that what they told you?

15 A. Right.

16  
17 Q. And, therefore, when you sought counselling from --

18 A. Can, can --

19  
20 Q. Excuse me, when you sought counselling or the name of  
21 a counsellor from the Bishop of Parramatta, you told him  
22 why you needed counselling, didn't you?

23 A. Yes, I did.

24  
25 Q. Did you go to the counsellor he recommended?

26 A. I went to the counsellor and I had about, I think,  
27 three or four sessions, weekly sessions with him, and there  
28 was obviously something not working, we weren't getting on  
29 at all well, and I stopped counselling with him and I took  
30 up counselling with a Brother Patrick White, who was a  
31 Registered Psychologist, who I had met when he came to the  
32 St John of God Brothers doing some sessions with them.

33  
34 Q. You then left the St John of God Hospital because you  
35 were aware that police were investigating your conduct?

36 A. Yes, that's right.

37  
38 Q. Then, ultimately you were charged in February 1993 for  
39 the first time?

40 A. Yes.

41  
42 Q. In May 1993 you appeared in the Magistrates' Court in  
43 Victoria?

44 A. Yes.

45  
46 Q. On that occasion Father McInerney gave evidence on  
47 your behalf?

1 A. I don't know if I remember that. And I think  
2 yesterday, with that appearance, the only thing I can  
3 remember at all about being in court was that my sister was  
4 sitting behind me, one of my sisters was sitting - that's  
5 the only thing I can remember.  
6

7 Q. If Father McInerney has given sworn evidence that he  
8 went to court with you and gave character evidence on your  
9 behalf, you would accept that to be true, wouldn't you?

10 A. Oh, yes, of course.  
11

12 Q. And if Father McInerney gave evidence that you had  
13 contacted him and asked him to give evidence on his behalf,  
14 you would accept that, wouldn't you?

15 A. I would, yes. But I'm just not sure why I would have  
16 approached Father McInerney.  
17

18 Q. You accept you did approach him?

19 A. Yes, I must have.  
20

21 Q. It's also the case, isn't it, that as you approached  
22 Father McInerney to give evidence on your behalf, you  
23 approached Father Pell to give evidence on your behalf, or  
24 then auxiliary Bishop as he was?

25 A. Well, as I said yesterday, I thought that all the  
26 approaches to these people were made by the barrister.  
27

28 Q. Well, you know now, from Father McInerney's evidence,  
29 that you approached him directly.

30 A. Yes, I must have.  
31

32 Q. Isn't it the case that you also approached then  
33 auxiliary Bishop Pell to ask him to give evidence on your  
34 behalf?

35 A. Well, it looks like I must have done that, yes.  
36

37 Q. When you approached him, you told him what the charges  
38 were, didn't you?

39 A. Yes, he would have known that.  
40

41 Q. And you talked to him about what he could say on your  
42 behalf?

43 A. No, I don't think so.  
44

45 Q. And you told him that you were pleading guilty to the  
46 charges?

47 A. Well, yes, I may have.

1

2 Q. You must have, mustn't you? What would be the point  
3 talking about what he would say on your behalf unless he  
4 knew you were pleading guilty, Mr Ridsdale?

5 A. Yeah, well, that makes sense. But, Miss, I just don't  
6 remember. What you're saying is making sense and it's  
7 logical, but I just don't remember.

8

9 Q. In November 1993 you were laicised?

10 A. That's right.

11

12 Q. And that was with your consent?

13 A. That was either with my consent or at my request, and  
14 I'm not sure whether it was my request or whether it was  
15 the Bishop asking if I would.

16

17 Q. In any event --

18 A. But then I think, I think it's something that the  
19 Bishop - in those days, I'm not sure what it's like now,  
20 but I'm pretty sure that the Bishop wasn't able to order  
21 laicisation to happen; I think he could only recommend it  
22 and that the priest concerned had to give consent.

23

24 Q. And you did.

25 A. That's my understanding of it. I did, I did. I did.

26

27 Q. Then in August 1994 you pleaded guilty to a range of  
28 representative charges, and three people gave evidence of a  
29 character nature on your behalf; the first was Frank  
30 Madden?

31 A. Yes, that was in Warrnambool. I do remember that, it  
32 was in Warrnambool.

33

34 Q. And Frank Madden was the parish priest at Horsham when  
35 you were the assistant priest?

36 A. Yes.

37

38 Q. And he was a family friend, wasn't he?

39 A. Yes.

40

41 Q. And you told Frank Madden, when you were at Horsham,  
42 of your offending against children, didn't you?

43 A. Well, I don't know whether I did or not. I may have,  
44 but I don't know.

45

46 Q. You approached him to ask him to give character  
47 evidence on your behalf in 1994, didn't you?

1 A. Yes, I think I would have.  
2  
3 Q. Well, you did, didn't you?  
4 A. Well, yes, but I've got no recollection of talking to  
5 him about it or asking him, but yes, I'll say yes to that.  
6  
7 Q. Well, you must have asked him for him to come along  
8 and give character evidence, mustn't you?  
9 A. Yes, but, as I say, it was either I or the legal team  
10 that would have approached him. I probably would have  
11 suggested him.  
12  
13 Q. Frank Madden was a family friend and a priest who  
14 you'd worked with. You would have contacted --  
15 A. Yes.  
16  
17 Q. -- him, wouldn't you?  
18 A. Well, I don't know whether I suggested him to the  
19 solicitor or whether I approached him myself.  
20  
21 Q. Brendan Davey gave evidence of a character nature on  
22 your behalf?  
23 A. Brendan Davey, yes.  
24  
25 Q. You asked him to do that, didn't you?  
26 A. Well, I don't know whether I did or I suggested him as  
27 a person I would like there.  
28  
29 Q. And there was a woman who gave evidence, Ms Morton?  
30 A. Yes, Kath Morton.  
31  
32 Q. Who was she?  
33 A. She was a woman that I had done a lot of work with  
34 around the Diocese of Ballarat with the Catholic Women's  
35 League, and she became a good friend of mine and that's why  
36 I would have suggested her.  
37  
38 Q. Had you told her about your offending before, as you  
39 say, you suggested her to give character evidence?  
40 A. Well, I don't know whether I told her, but I think by  
41 that stage it would have been public knowledge.  
42  
43 Q. Because you'd already been --  
44 A. Because charges had been laid and it would have been  
45 public knowledge as to what the charges were.  
46  
47 Q. In 2014, last year, you were sentenced before the

1 County Court of Victoria. Can I ask you to go to tab 120.  
2 This is the reasons for sentence given on that occasion.  
3 There's a description beginning on page 3 of your offending  
4 and the various complainants are referred to as V1, V2,  
5 et cetera.

6 A. Where is this page?

7  
8 Q. I'm taking you through it, Mr Ridsdale. From page 3,  
9 do you see the heading, "Offending".

10 A. "Offending", yes.

11  
12 Q. Then there's a description of your offending, and  
13 those against whom you offended are referred to as V1, V2,  
14 et cetera.

15 A. There's no V1 or V2 here.

16  
17 Q. Well, there is if you look carefully, Mr Ridsdale.  
18 Look at paragraph 8.

19 A. We're on paragraph 6, sorry. Yes, V1, V2, yes.

20  
21 Q. V4 is referred to on paragraph 11.

22 A. Yes.

23  
24 Q. And there's a description of what you did to V4. Then  
25 at paragraph 12, starting with the word "Although", the  
26 Chief Judge said, and I quote:

27  
28 *Although it does not directly involve you,*  
29 *Mr Ridsdale, there is a further disturbing*  
30 *aspect to this incident, namely, that this*  
31 *complainant believes another priest was*  
32 *present for a short time while you were*  
33 *sexually assaulting her and must have been*  
34 *aware of the assault but did not intervene.*

35  
36 Do you have a recollection of these assaults,  
37 particularly the assault against V4?

38 A. No, a lot of them I don't have, no.

39  
40 Q. These offences were in relation to your offending in  
41 1961 to 1980, when you worked as a Catholic priest  
42 throughout Western Victoria. Do you recall an occasion on  
43 which you are assaulting a girl - now, let me stop there.  
44 You generally assaulted boys and not girls, didn't you?

45 A. That's right.

46  
47 Q. There were very few girls that you sexually assaulted?

1 A. Yes.  
2  
3 Q. Paragraph 11 describes the complainant who you  
4 sexually assaulted and which assault you pleaded guilty to.  
5 It's referred to as taking place in Ballarat.  
6 A. Yes.  
7  
8 Q. And it refers to her being in your bedroom to look at  
9 your rock collection. Now, where did you have a rock  
10 collection?  
11 A. Yes, I did.  
12  
13 Q. Where were you living when you had a rock collection?  
14 A. Most places that I was living I had a rock collection,  
15 but I think this one is Ballarat East.  
16  
17 Q. She's referring to 1966, when she was 4, and then the  
18 offence is when she was 10 or 11, which would make it 1972  
19 and you were at St Alipius in 1972, weren't you?  
20 A. Yes, that's right.  
21  
22 Q. And you were living in the presbytery in 1972-1973,  
23 weren't you?  
24 A. Yes.  
25  
26 Q. And you were living with other priests in the  
27 presbytery from 1972-1973, weren't you?  
28 A. That's right.  
29  
30 Q. Who were you living with?  
31 A. Well, I said I didn't remember any of the priests who  
32 were there with me, but you tell me that George Pell was  
33 there at the same time so I have to accept that, that  
34 George Pell was there, but I don't remember any of the  
35 others.  
36  
37 Q. The St Alipius presbytery was over two floors, is that  
38 right, with two bedrooms at the top?  
39 A. I can't remember the layout of the - I don't remember  
40 it being two floors. There was an older part with a new  
41 part built on.  
42  
43 Q. Do you remember how many priests were living at  
44 St Alipius presbytery at the time you were there in 1972  
45 and 1973?  
46 A. No.  
47



1 Q. You accept that, when you assaulted this child in your  
2 bedroom, that at the presbytery there could well have been  
3 the presence of another priest?  
4 A. There could have been, yes. There probably would have  
5 been.  
6  
7 Q. And, therefore, as described here, another priest may  
8 well have been present for a short time while you were  
9 sexually assaulting her?  
10 A. Well, yes, yes.  
11  
12 Q. And you admitted to sexually assaulting her in the  
13 circumstance as set out, didn't you?  
14 A. Yes.  
15  
16 Q. And you accepted her evidence as to the assault and  
17 that's why you admitted it, isn't that right, Mr Ridsdale?  
18 A. Yes.  
19  
20 Q. Therefore, you would accept as well her belief that  
21 another priest was present for a short time while you were  
22 sexually assaulting her?  
23 A. Yes, I accept that that's what she believes, yes.  
24  
25 Q. Can you help us with who was the priest?  
26 A. Can I help you with what, I'm sorry?  
27  
28 Q. Who was the priest?  
29 A. I don't know, because I have said I don't know who the  
30 other priests were there at the same time, except George  
31 Pell.  
32  
33 Q. And it would have been --  
34 A. I have no idea. Miss, I have no idea of the priests  
35 who were there with me in Ballarat East.  
36  
37 Q. Did the priests who were not resident in the  
38 presbytery come to the bedrooms of priests who were?  
39 A. Yes. Yes, that would happen.  
40  
41 Q. More frequently, in the area of bedrooms where a  
42 priest living in the presbytery lived in, would be priests  
43 who also lived in the presbytery?  
44 A. I'm sorry, I don't understand what you said there.  
45  
46 Q. Priests who are present near the bedrooms of other  
47 priests who live in the presbytery may either be priests

1 outside, that is, who don't live in the presbytery, or  
2 priests that live in the presbytery?  
3 A. Yeah.  
4  
5 Q. And more likely than not a priest would be present who  
6 lived in the presbytery rather than was a visiting priest?  
7 A. Well, a priest's bedroom wasn't only his bedroom, it  
8 was also his study room.  
9  
10 Q. That's got nothing to do with (indistinct), is it?  
11 A. No, but it wasn't just a bedroom. It was probably the  
12 only place where the priest could say, "This is my office".  
13 I mean, he wouldn't entertain people there who came looking  
14 for help or a talk, there'd be an office, a room in the  
15 presbytery itself for that.  
16  
17 Q. There'd be no real reason for any priest to be near  
18 the bedroom of a priest who lived in the presbytery other  
19 than a priest who lived there as well?  
20 A. Yes. What I'm saying is that, if a priest came to  
21 visit me, a friend who was a priest came to visit me, I  
22 wouldn't entertain him in the front parlour or the  
23 reception room of the presbytery, I would go and talk with  
24 him in my bedroom, which was not just a bedroom, it was  
25 kind of my office.  
26  
27 Q. When you were sexually abusing a child in your  
28 bedroom, you wouldn't have another priest in there  
29 entertaining them in the front parlour, would you?  
30 A. No.  
31  
32 Q. Over at page 14 of the reasons for sentence, the Chief  
33 Judge records that:  
34  
35 *At the conclusion of the school holidays in*  
36 *1973 she was aged 10 to 11.*  
37  
38 This is the same complainant, Mr Ridsdale.  
39 A. What paragraph are we at?  
40  
41 Q. Fourteen.  
42 A. What paragraph though, please?  
43  
44 Q. Fourteen, Mr Ridsdale.  
45 A. Page 14?  
46  
47 Q. No, paragraph.

1 A. Right.

2

3 Q. The Chief Judge refers to the child being 10 or 11 and  
4 around the school holidays in 1973, and then refers to  
5 another offence you committed. If you go then back to  
6 paragraph 12 which refers to 10 or 11, it more clearly puts  
7 the timing of that offence as between 1972 and 1973,  
8 doesn't it?

9 A. Right.

10

11 MS FURNESS: Your Honour, might the early luncheon  
12 adjournment be taken? I understand the witness is getting  
13 somewhat distracted and may benefit from a longer  
14 adjournment?

15

16 THE CHAIR: All right, we'll adjourn until 2 o'clock.

17

18 **LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT**

19

20 MS FURNESS: Thank you, Your Honour.

21

22 Q. Mr Ridsdale, before the luncheon adjournment I was  
23 asking you questions about your time at the St Alipius  
24 presbytery and who was living there with you.

25 A. Yes.

26

27 Q. I can advise you now, from what I understand are the  
28 official records, that in 1972 Monsignor W McMahon and  
29 Reverend A McInerney and Reverend W J O'Connell were  
30 present and living at the presbytery; in 1973, Monsignor  
31 McMahon, yourself and George Pell, then Reverend Pell, were  
32 living there; in 1974, Monsignor McMahon, Reverend Pell,  
33 Reverend O'Connell and Reverend O'Toole were living at the  
34 presbytery. I am able to give you that information in  
35 terms of who was living there at the time that you  
36 assaulted the complainant known as V4. Now, does that  
37 assist you in the evidence that you gave earlier in  
38 relation to who you were living with?

39 A. I can remember the senior priest, Bill McMahon, I  
40 remember him being there. I can't remember any of the  
41 others.

42

43 Q. But you accept that, if the directory indicates they  
44 were living there, they were living there?

45 A. Yes, I accept that, Miss.

46

47 Q. At the beginning of your evidence I read out the

1 various charges against you over the period from 1993 to  
2 more recently. I take it, Mr Ridsdale, that when you  
3 disclosed to Bishop Mulkearns, on the occasions that you  
4 did disclose, that you told him the nature of your  
5 offending; that's right?

6 A. I don't know whether I would or not, what details I  
7 would have given him I'm not sure.  
8

9 Q. It's likely, isn't it, that you would have told him  
10 what you had done to the children that was the subject of  
11 the complaint against you?

12 A. No. Well, I don't think I would have told him any  
13 details about the activities, what I'd been doing.  
14

15 Q. If the complaint against you concerned the detail of  
16 your offending against a child, you from time to time  
17 admitted that complaint when pressed by Bishop Mulkearns,  
18 didn't you?

19 A. I don't know.  
20

21 Q. You know that in Inglewood you told Bishop Mulkearns  
22 about a complaint that was about to be made about you to  
23 Bishop Mulkearns?

24 A. When I left Inglewood and went to Ballarat, I would  
25 have told him that there were investigations going on.  
26

27 Q. Well, you told him to expect --

28 A. I don't know whether I've ever told him any details  
29 about the complaint, it would have been just generalities.  
30

31 Q. You told him in Inglewood to expect a complaint by a  
32 policeman about you and the policeman's son, didn't you?

33 A. Yes, but what I thought you were asking me was about  
34 the actual details of what I had done to each victim.  
35

36 Q. In terms of the complaint that you told him to expect  
37 in Inglewood, you would have told him, wouldn't you, the  
38 details of the complaint against you; that is, you must  
39 have disclosed the nature of the conduct that you expected  
40 the complaint to cover.

41 A. Yes, the general nature of the conduct, but the actual  
42 details, I don't know whether I would have told him or not.  
43

44 Q. Do you remember what you told him in 1970-odd, when  
45 you were moved from Inglewood?

46 A. No, Miss, I've already said that I don't remember  
47 those meetings with Bishop Mulkearns; I certainly don't

1 remember what I would have told him.

2

3 Q. At that time --

4 A. I'm sorry, but I can't give you what I don't have, and  
5 I don't have those memories.

6

7 Q. You pleaded guilty in 1993, 1994, 2006 and 2014 to  
8 various offences, didn't you?

9 A. Yes, I did.

10

11 Q. And you accepted, by your plea of guilty, that the  
12 offences had been committed in the way that they were set  
13 out in the charges?

14 A. Well, yes, I accepted that that was what the  
15 complainants believed that I had done.

16

17 Q. Well, that's what you pleaded guilty to, isn't it?

18 A. I pleaded guilty to all those charges.

19

20 Q. And they included indecent assault, carnal knowledge,  
21 buggery, didn't they?

22 A. Yes, I pleaded guilty to those.

23

24 Q. You told Bishop Mulkearns, didn't you, when a  
25 complaint you expected to be made in Inglewood about that  
26 complaint because you were concerned about the seriousness  
27 of the complaint against you, weren't you?

28 A. Yes, I would have been very concerned about it.

29

30 Q. And you were concerned because there might be police  
31 investigation?

32 A. Yes, there was that.

33

34 Q. And you were concerned because you might lose your  
35 priesthood, having recalled what Bishop O'Collins said to  
36 you back in the early 1960s?

37 A. Yes, exactly.

38

39 Q. And, in those circumstances, you conveyed, didn't you,  
40 to Bishop Mulkearns what you understood to be the serious  
41 nature of the complaint?

42 A. Yes, I would have told him what the complaint was.

43

44 Q. So, you would have told him what the complaint was,  
45 although you don't now remember what you said to him?

46 A. No. It's reasonable. What you say is reasonable, and  
47 I accept that, that that should have been and would have

1           been what I would have discussed with him, but I'm sorry, I  
2           don't have any memory of the conversation.  
3  
4           Q.    It would have been important to convey the seriousness  
5           of it to him so that he would take appropriate action to  
6           protect you?  
7           A.    Well, yes, that would have been possibly part of my  
8           understanding and part of my hope.  
9  
10          Q.    It would have been uppermost in your mind, wouldn't  
11          it, in your discussion with the Bishop --  
12          A.    Yes, because I would have been --  
13  
14          Q.    -- that he understood the seriousness of the  
15          consequences for you in order for him to take protective  
16          action?  
17          A.    Yes, that's reasonable, I accept that.  
18  
19          MS FURNESS:   Thank you, I have nothing further,  
20          Your Honour.  
21  
22          THE CHAIR:   Q.    Mr Ridsdale, do you accept that someone  
23          with your issues should never have been a priest?  
24          A.    Yes, I accept that now.  I'm sorry that there was  
25          nothing --  
26  
27          Q.    What should have been in place with the church to stop  
28          you becoming a priest?  
29          A.    There should have been a better screening process that  
30          was much more thorough, a psychological process that was  
31          much more thorough than anything that was conducted then.  
32  
33          Q.    If, when you first discussed your offending behaviour  
34          with the Bishop, he'd gone to the police, that would have  
35          brought it to an end, wouldn't it, as far as your role in  
36          the church was concerned?  
37          A.    It would have, and I am now sorry that it didn't; that  
38          it didn't happen.  
39  
40          Q.    You might be sorry, but the offending --  
41          A.    It would have saved so many others.  
42  
43          Q.    And the effect of it is, you would have been removed  
44          from the priesthood forthwith, wouldn't you?  
45          A.    That's right.  That's right, I would have gone to  
46          gaol.  
47

1 Q. When you went to --  
2 A. I (indistinct) that now.  
3  
4 Q. When you went to America for treatment; do you  
5 remember that?  
6 A. Yes, I do.  
7  
8 Q. How many other priests were there who had similar  
9 sexual problems that you had?  
10 A. I think there were about 30 in our group, and my  
11 remembrance of it would be probably two-thirds.  
12  
13 Q. Two-thirds had paedophilia problems?  
14 A. I think so, Your Honour, but I just can't be sure of  
15 that now.  
16  
17 Q. Was there any suggestion during the course of your  
18 treatment that you or any of those who were with you being  
19 treated shouldn't be allowed to be priests within the  
20 church?  
21 A. No, I don't think so. I don't remember anything like  
22 that coming up in group sessions. That sort of thing may  
23 have been discussed - we have individual therapists. The  
24 treatment place was organised and run by the group of  
25 religious, but all the therapists who came in were lay  
26 people, professional analysts from Albuquerque and  
27 Santa Fe, and we had one-to-one sessions weekly with our  
28 individual therapists and then there were many other group  
29 sessions, but I don't remember anything like that coming up  
30 in group sessions at all, and I don't think that my  
31 therapist ever discussed it with me, about suitability.  
32  
33 Q. It's plain that the treatment --  
34 A. I acknowledge, Your Honour, that it should have been,  
35 it should have been uppermost in the minds of people but I  
36 can't remember it ever being discussed.  
37  
38 Q. So you accept that, once it had been recognised you  
39 had these problems, your life as a priest should have been  
40 brought to an end by the church?  
41 A. Yes. Yes, I do.  
42  
43 Q. It's plain that, although you went through this  
44 treatment, it didn't work, isn't it?  
45 A. In New Mexico?  
46  
47 Q. Yes.

1 A. I didn't offend at all after I came back from America.  
2  
3 Q. You didn't?  
4 A. No.  
5  
6 Q. So you say the treatment worked?  
7 A. Yes, I think it did.  
8  
9 Q. When did you come back from New Mexico?  
10 A. I was there in 1990. I would have come back, I think,  
11 towards the end of 1990.  
12  
13 Q. When were you arrested?  
14 A. 1993.  
15  
16 Q. So, there's a two-year period, is there, between your  
17 return and your arrest?  
18 A. Yes. But I wasn't locked up, I would have had  
19 opportunities to go to shopping malls, to beaches, to  
20 anywhere, and I'm happy to say that I didn't offend in that  
21 period.  
22  
23 THE CHAIR: Very well. Does anyone else have any  
24 questions? You do, Mr Gray. Maybe you should go second if  
25 there's someone else. No one else has any questions?  
26 Mr Gray?  
27  
28 MR GRAY: Your Honour, I may well have some questions, but  
29 I'm not in a position today to embark upon them.  
30  
31 THE CHAIR: Why not?  
32  
33 MR GRAY: Your Honour, as the Commission is aware, we have  
34 heard Mr Ridsdale's evidence as he has given it yesterday  
35 and today, but we had no prior notice or indication of what  
36 it was that he would say. We did write twice asking for  
37 such an indication, but the Commission has, as its perfect  
38 prerogative, said that it would not do that.  
39  
40 And so, he has covered a lot of ground, he has named a  
41 lot of names, many questions have been put to him where he  
42 has said he doesn't remember or he doesn't know. There are  
43 many things which we will need to investigate and check,  
44 people we will need to speak to, and that will take some  
45 time  
46  
47 THE CHAIR: So, what are you suggesting?



1  
2 MR GRAY: I would like, with respect, to reserve my  
3 position in relation to questioning Mr Ridsdale until the  
4 second part of these hearings, which I understand is  
5 scheduled for the latter part of this year.

6  
7 THE CHAIR: Ms Furness?

8  
9 MS FURNESS: Well, Your Honour, my friend was in the same  
10 position as everybody else at the Bar table, in the sense  
11 that Mr Ridsdale gave evidence without any person being  
12 aware of this precise nature of his evidence.

13  
14 I made it clear in the opening what I wouldn't cover  
15 and that what I would cover would be questions of who knew  
16 what and the significant documents have been tendered that  
17 largely go to that question.

18  
19 However, having said that, I have no objections to  
20 Mr Ridsdale being recalled in November for that purpose, or  
21 whenever the hearing is.

22  
23 THE CHAIR: You make the assumption we will be here  
24 in November. Is that an appropriate course, or will it be  
25 better to have him recalled before stage 2?

26  
27 MS FURNESS: Well, there's a question of logistics,  
28 Your Honour.

29  
30 THE CHAIR: I understand all that. It's a matter for you  
31 as to the course that you wish to take.

32  
33 MS FURNESS: Subject to logistics, which are significant  
34 in terms of the movements of Your Honours and the  
35 Commissioners and the availability of the court and the  
36 like. It could be probably more easily done in Sydney  
37 rather than Ballarat, if indeed there was to be a hearing  
38 between now and the second proposed Ballarat hearing.

39  
40 THE CHAIR: Mr Gray, what we'll do is, we will grant you  
41 an opportunity at a later time to ask Mr Ridsdale  
42 questions. Whether that is in stage 2 or at some other  
43 point, I'll discuss with counsel.

44  
45 MR GRAY: Yes, Your Honour.

46  
47 THE CHAIR: And we'll let you know.

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MR GRAY: Thank you, Your Honour.

THE CHAIR: It may be the suggestion should be taken up that it could be done from Sydney. It will again be by video-link, we'll have to consider that as well.

MR GRAY: Yes, Your Honour.

THE CHAIR: Until you hear from Ms Furness, I don't think you should assume that it will necessarily be at stage 2.

MR GRAY: Very well, Your Honour.

MS FURNESS: Your Honour, I suggest that the witness not be discharged. However, his presence is largely determined by a work order rather than a summons.

THE CHAIR: Mr Ridsdale, have you heard the exchange between myself and counsel?

A. Yes, I have, Your Honour.

Q. Mr Gray, who appears for the church authorities, wants an opportunity to ask you questions on some later occasion. Do you understand that?

A. I understand that.

Q. I have indicated to him that that will be possible, but quite when that occasion will be has not been decided, but you will be told in due course when it will be that Mr Gray will have an opportunity to ask you questions. Do you understand?

A. I understand, yes, Your Honour.

Q. Otherwise, it's necessary for me to say that you are not formally excused from giving evidence before this hearing. Do you understand?

A. Yes.

THE CHAIR: Very well. Thank you, Mr Ridsdale, that concludes your evidence today.

<THE WITNESS WITHDREW

MS FURNESS: Your Honour, there's one matter I need to address.

1           Last week I referred to the tender of a letter that  
2 the Royal Commission had received, and this was on day 3  
3 or 4 in relation to a statement that had been tendered, and  
4 the statement was critical of the author of an article in  
5 Eureka. The email that was received that was tendered  
6 apologised for that article and the contents of it, and I  
7 indicated that the two witnesses who were relevant to  
8 giving evidence about that article were pleased, as I  
9 understood it, to read it. I'm told that indeed one of  
10 those witnesses was not pleased to receive the letter,  
11 although I understand that the other was pleased. So, I  
12 just indicate that.

13  
14 THE CHAIR: Thank you.

15  
16 MS FURNESS: There's one remaining witness, Bishop Bird.  
17 Your Honour might consider adjourning.

18  
19 THE CHAIR: I think arrangements have been made for him to  
20 give evidence at 10 o'clock in the morning.

21  
22 MS FURNESS: I understand that.

23  
24 THE CHAIR: Very well. We will adjourn until 10 o'clock  
25 when Bishop Bird will give his evidence.

26  
27 **AT 2.24PM THE COMMISSION WAS ADJOURNED**  
28 **TO FRIDAY, 29 MAY 2015 AT 10AM**

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