



A Response of a Compassionate Church – Victoria

The Royal Commission on child sexual abuse is now underway. The publicity surrounding this Royal Commission may help people who have been abused to speak out for the first time, even if the incident happened a very long time ago. If this happens within your congregation you may find the following information helpful.

How to handle disclosures of historical abuse

Listen...do not add anything to what the person says

Reassure...them and acknowledge the large step forward they have taken in speaking to you

Inform...the person that there are people who can help them (See below for contact details)

Ensure...the person is in a safe state of mind, before they leave you

Act...by walking beside them when and if they decide to report the matter to the authorities

How to report

Encourage adults who disclose historical abuse (that occurred when they were a child) to report the alleged abuse to Police or a counsellor, and in the event of the alleged abuser being a Minister, a Member or adherent, to the Church's Ethical Standards Officer – Lauren Mosso

Ph: (03) 9340 8825, e-mail: lauren.mosso@victas.uca.org.au

The victim of historical child sexual abuse can be heard in a public or private hearing at the **Royal Commission on Institutional Responses to Child Abuse**.

[Note: all disclosures from children and young people alleging harm, abuse or neglect should be reported to both Child Protection Services and local Police. Inform the (UCA) General Secretary of the allegation and the Congregation's proposed plan of support.]

Reporting and Counselling Services

Royal Commission on Institutional Responses to Child Abuse

Callers within Australia – 1800 099 340 (Toll free number).

Calls from a mobile or pay telephone will attract additional charges).

www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/

Bethel Pastoral Centre (Synod Resource)

59 Doncaster Road

Balwyn North VIC 3104

Ph: (03) 9859 8700

Email: support@bethelcentre.com.au

<http://bethel.victas.uca.org.au/>

Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1800 806 292

SASS - Sexual Assault support service (for recent or past assaults)

These organisations that are located throughout Victoria will deliver free services such as counselling, support and case management to individuals and their family members before, during and after their interaction with the Royal Commission:

<http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/sexual-assault/support-services/sexual-assault-support-services-contact-list>