“It’s all sexual assault; a service response to the emerging clergy abuse crisis”.

Presenters:
Shireen Gunn, Manager Ballarat CASA
Andrea Lockhart, Senior Clinician, Ballarat CASA
1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men have been abused by the time they reach 18
80% abused by family members.
Female children more likely to be abused in the home
Male children more likely to be abused outside the home

ACSSA, 2012
“the focus has been on male victims, which is in line with data showing that most cases in the United states have involved clergy sexual contact with young adolescent male boys”

Doyle, T. & Rubino, S 2004, Catholic Clergy Sexual Abuse Meets the Civil Law. Pgs 47,48
• Educational institutions were commonly reported sites of abuse
• Most of these were faith based institutions, followed by government institutions
• Of the faith based institutions, 68% were catholic and 12% were Anglican
• While almost 9 in 10 perpetrators were reportedly male they were most likely to be members of the clergy or religious orders

“Professor Patrick Parkinson of Sydney University, a lawyer and expert on child protection, told the Victorian Inquiry,
…if you compare the statistics, I would say conservatively that there is six times as much abuse in the Catholic Church as all the other Churches in Australia combined.

Putting things in perspective, the Catholic Church is the largest Church, and it also had a great deal of involvement in school work and orphanages, children’s homes and so on.

Even still, the levels of the abuse in the Catholic Church are strikingly out of proportion with any other Church.”

“Ballarat [is] a tribal Catholic in a town where priests, nuns and brothers ruled the Catholic roost”

“Accused clergy were dealt with by church courts then handed to secular jurisdiction for further punishment. That did not stop the crimes”

“… Canon law 982 contained a canon stipulating that if victims confessed to being sexually abused by priests, the penitents were not to be absolved of sin until a retraction had been made and ‘damages repaired.

…This code did not suggest that the priests who coerced and blackmailed parishioners to provide sex should be punished”.

Briggs F, (2010) p1
“Naïve trusting parents have allowed priests to occupy the same room and even the same bed as their sons when they’ve had too much whisky. Parents were flattered when priests chose their children to be altar boys. They were prouder still when their sons were chosen to accompany priests on outings to other parishes or have sleep-overs in seminaries”.

“There were 45 kids in that classroom and he must have tried everyone. Green was sure the staff at St. Patrick’s knew about Dowlan. He told me: “All the boys talked about what was going on. I was only 12 years old and it was as plain as the nose on my face. How adults couldn’t figure it out was beyond me.”

Marr (2013) P19
“Churches tend to mirror aspects of family life and relationships so the abusive possibilities of one may be replicated in another”.

“Clergy sexual abuse victims respond to trauma in predictable ways. Trauma blocking is the attempt to numb, block or eliminate the pain. Trauma shame emerges from the breach of trust and results in feelings that one is flawed or defective.”

Doyle, T. & Rubino, S. Catholic Clergy Sexual Abuse meets the Civil law. (2004)
Working with men – a feminist analysis

- Myths of ‘maleness’ / Australian machismo bloke culture silences -does not allow for weakness
- ‘Shame-o-phobia’
- Long term effects similar to women though amplified by isolation and shame for men and fear of homophobia
A local response

- 46 plus suicides in the Ballarat area linked to institutional abuse
- One male survivor, formed a ‘quasi support group’ after a suicide, developing the Ballarat Group Submission, presented to parliament in April 2013.
- Direct link to CASA clinician, “word of mouth” – he would pass on details and men would directly contact Andrea at CASA
- Royal Commission clients/males/ prioritised, large numbers coming forward in Ballarat

- August 2013 fortnightly men’s support group formed
Our group meets every second Tuesday, 5.30 to 7.15 at CASA, corner Vale & Edward St, Sebastopol. We always start with some food, such as pizza, pies etc, which gives us a chance to catch up with what has been happening over the fortnight.

Most of the men in the group have experienced childhood sexual abuse in institutional settings. The group doesn’t focus on the story of what happened, more on the effects – ways people have coped, like using drugs, alcohol, overworking, self harming and relationship breakdowns. We try to develop more positive coping strategies.

It can be really helpful to realise that others are similar to you in how the abuse has affected their lives and we definitely don’t tell each other to ‘forget about it or get over it’. These are some of the things the men have said about the group:

“it’s the first time I felt like I was not the freak show”
“I hadn’t gone out for a few years; since joining this group I have been out twice”
“I’ve been to lots of other groups, but I’ve got more out of this group”
“In the group you’re talking to people who understand”
“you can relate to other people’s experiences”

If you are interested in joining the group, or just to see what it is like, please contact Andrea at CASA on 53203933. We always welcome new people.
“For the first time in 50 years I didn’t feel isolated. I left the group feeling peaceful. As I listened to the other men’s stories I felt like I wasn’t the only member of the freak show. I wanted to hug the women running the group and say ‘Thank You’ for having the foresight to run this group.

“growing as an Aboriginal child in an orphanage, I’ve spent my whole life not knowing where I fit in, this is the first time I ever felt I belonged”

“this group is my coping strategy”

(I) got more out of the group experience than I did from years of AA. I found it more helpful than my one on one counselling!
‘BSG’ achievements

- Issues paper “towards healing”

- Issues paper “redress schemes”

- Facilitator Andrea invited to Royal Commission round table in Sydney “redress schemes”, group were able to have input into that meeting

- Developing of group submission with more names and over 17 institutions

- August 2014, Special meeting with chair of Royal Commission and commissioner Coates – over 15 attended, and two wives
Child sex abuse victims’ list for royal commission

17 institutions named

SEVENTEEN institutions have been named on Ballarat’s child sexual abuse survivors’ group submission to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse.

Nine of the institutions are local, with another eight from around Victoria, where abuse allegedly took place.

Survivor Peter Blenkiron said many individuals who had joined the submission were also taking major steps forward by changing from anonymous to named victims.

FIONA HENDERSON

“There is definitely a shift, which goes along with the process of healing,” Mr Blenkiron said.

However, Mr Blenkiron and Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault senior counsellor Andrea Lockhart have urged any other victims to come forward.

“We will be giving them support through the process,” Ms Lockhart said.

“This is a vehicle to be part of it (the Royal Commission), if you are finding it difficult to do it yourself.”

The group submission will be presented to one of the commissioners in a private hearing, which Mr Blenkiron said would “put faces to names”.

“We just want to let people know they can come forward to CASA and it will be an easy, supportive, non-intrusive approach,” he said.

“They can still be part of the voice. It’s about empowerment and a way of being heard.”

The Ballarat institutions named include St Alipius Christian Brothers School, St Patrick’s Christian Brothers, Macarthur Street, Dean and Queen Street primary schools, St Patrick’s Secondary College, St Paul’s Technical College, St Joseph Boys’ Home and St Alipius Junior School, which was similar to a kindergarten.

Those named outside Ballarat include Geelong Grammar and St Augustine’s Orphanage in Geelong, St Joseph’s Technical College in Abbotsford, Christian Brothers College in Warrnambool, St Thomas Moore College in Forrest Hill, De La Salle College in Malvern, St Joseph’s Boys’ Home in Surrey Hills and Warragul Technical College.

If you would like more information, contact Ms Lockhart at CASA on 5320 3933.

fiona.henderson@fairfaxmedia.com.au
How BSG has evolved:

- Due to requests, opened the group to those who experienced abuse from families; not just institutions after all.... “it’s all sexual assault”.
- Many have given private submissions, made police statements with SANO, current court cases.
Many members of the group were witnesses during the hearings.

During the hearings the group expanded to 27, providing support to those attending.
Widespread media focus on the Ballarat hearings:

Royal Commission into sex abuse: Ballarat ‘suicide ...
www.news.com.au/national/crima/royal-commission-into-sex-abuse...
20/05/2015 · The Royal Commission into Institutional Child ... to give evidence at the Ballarat hearings of the Royal Commission into ... Associated Press
Ballarat priest used confession to admit abuse, royal ...
www.culleteducation.com/group/874-clergy-abuse/28594-ballarat-priest...
Ballarat priest used confession to admit abuse, royal commission told ... Australian Associated Press/May ... Ballarat bishop Paul Bird agreed that would be a ...
Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse …
www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au
Please be aware that the content of the public hearings can be … The Royal Commission will hold a public hearing into Victorian state run youth training …
Royal commission and Ballarat clergy abuse | Daily Mail Online
www.dailymail.co.uk/…/Royal-commission-Ballarat-clergy-abuse.html
CLERGY ABUSE IN BALLARAT AND THE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ROYAL COMMISSION
BALLARAT PUBLIC HEARINGS * Three … Associated Press. … and others associated …
Media releases, Child Abuse Royal Commission
The Royal Commission will hold public hearings in … to Child Sexual Abuse will be holding a community information forum in Ballarat on Wednesday 19 ..
Widespread child abuse in Ballarat diocese | Daily Mail Online
www.dailymail.co.uk/.../Widespread-child-abuse-Ballarat-diocese.html
CLAIMS AND REVELATIONS FROM THE CHILD SEX ABUSE ROYAL COMMISSION'S HEARINGS IN BALLARAT EARLY ... By Australian Associated Press. ... Published by Associated ...

Nun laughed after priest's abuse: victim | Daily Mail Online
www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/aap/article-3088244/Ballarat-abuse...
Nun laughed after priest's abuse: victim. ... to read his statement to the commission hearing in Ballarat. ... the royal commission of horrific abuse in ...

Bill Shorten calls on Cardinal George Pell to return to ... www.theguardian.com › World › Australia
... Justice Jennifer Coate preside at the royal commission's public hearings in Ballarat. ... Australian Associated Press. ... The Guardian back to top. home; US

Ballarat abuse horror doesn't go away | Daily Mail Online
www.dailymail.co.uk/.../Ballarat-abuse-horror-doesnt-away.html
Ballarat abuse horror doesn't go away. By Australian Associated Press. Published: ... He said a public hearing of the abuse royal commission, ...
Survivors' stories: Child sex abuse inquiry revives painful memories

Five victims call for recognition, justice and a national scheme to support survivors.

By Margaret Burn

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*Instead of this Government doing the right thing, they have re-traumatised victims and survivors.*

Anonymous sexual abuse survivor

As the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse begins its first public hearings in Ballarat, five victims have called for recognition, justice and a national scheme to support survivors.

During the 1960s and 1970s, a notorious paedophile ring preyed on children in the regional Victorian city of Ballarat.

Catholic priest Gerald Ridingsdale, Brother Robert Best, Brother Ted Dowlen and Brother Stephen Frances Farrell were among the convicted paedophiles who operated in the area.

Beginning on Tuesday, May 19 and continuing for the next three weeks, the royal commission will hear evidence from survivors of abuse at Catholic Church institutions in Ballarat.

They will hear evidence from students, parents and other witnesses, as well as the response of five Catholic institutions to

clergy abuse.
Many of the victims hope to achieve a sense of justice, but they are also calling for reform, and these five men insist the Government must act now.

To speak to someone about sexual abuse, contact the Victorian Centre Against Sexual Assault on 1800 808 392, or if you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Peter Blenkiron, 52, Ballarat

Peter Blenkiron was abused by a Christian Brother when he was 11 years old.

A student at St Patrick's Secondary School in Ballarat, he said convicted paedophile Edward Dowlan would set difficult homework and then punish him for not being able to complete it.

Dowlan made the students look the other way while he punished them with physical abuse, before comforting and then sexually abusing them.

"The worst stuff happened when I hadn't finished my homework, I was made to go back to his room," he said.

"When I reflect back on it, it makes me want to throw up, it makes me feel very damaged."

I lost everything, I lost my business, I lost relationships that were important to me, I lost property. I battled the suicide option for 12 years. I'm a broken man.

Peter Blenkiron

Mr Blenkiron said that although in earlier adulthood he was a high achiever, the trauma was a "ticking time-bomb".

He said he had seen other victims struggling with severe depression and suicide.

"I lost everything. I lost my business, I lost relationships that were important to me, I lost property. I battled the suicide option for 12 years. I'm a broken man," he said.
Victims have long had hope for the introduction of a support scheme, a model similar to TAC or Work Cover, which would provide support for things like housing, medical expenses and counselling.

That idea has been backed by churches, charities and victim support groups.

Cardinal George Pell previously vowed that the Catholic Church would review its compensation payments, even if it cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

But in March, the Federal Government made a submission to the royal commission rejecting a national support scheme because of the time and resources it would require, an announcement that devastated Mr Blinkhorn.

"Obvious the relationship between Pell and (Prime Minister Tony) Abbott is more important than sorting out the damage that was caused by child rape from members of the clergy, that was known about all those years by the hierarchy of the church," he said.

"I believe that the people that could make those decisions believe it's easier to do nothing and let the problems die away.

"Hitler used the gas chamber; this Government is using time to just let people die.

"The blood is on their hands."

Stephen Woods, 53, Melbourne

Stephen Woods said he was abused by three different men under the Catholic auspice while growing up in Ballarat.

Two of his older brothers were also sexually abused.

He said his first abuser was Robert Charles Best, the principal of St Alipius Primary School.

"I was 11 years old, and I was down the back in the classroom sitting on the art table and he came up and sat next to me and started putting his hand down the back of my pants," he said.

"He saw me withdraw and he started to become very violent." Mr Woods said the sexual abuse was coupled with verbal abuse.

"He would get me to slowly strip for him while he would masturbate behind his desk. And all the while he would tell me that it was my fault, that I was bad, that I was evil," he said.

"He would then put me over his knee and then he would have a good feel of my ass and then smack me."
The court case was an absolutely horrible thing. He had three or four hours of witnesses coming up saying what a good bloke he was.

Philip Nagle

Aged just nine, Mr Nagle said he did not realise he was being sexually assaulted at the time, only that he did not want it to happen again.

"He was holding me down and doing something, he lifted up his black gown," he said.

"When he got up and left, then I realised I was all wet between my legs and genitals, I came to find out later that he had ejaculated on me."

Like many of the victims, Mr Nagle said manipulation and childhood innocence meant it was not until later in life that he realised the severity of the crime, or the scope of abuse going on around him.

"I was obviously very glad and relieved when Brother Stephen Farrell took another boy out of the classroom instead of me," he said.

"We didn't actually know what was happening to us, but certainly when you look back now, you just think: how can so many evil Christian Brother paedophiles be in one place at the same time?"

"All the baddies were there at once."

Farrell was convicted of nine counts of assault in 1967 for the abuse of Mr Nagle and his brother, but Mr Nagle said he felt the courts did not give them any sense of justice.

"The court case was an absolutely horrible thing," he said.

"He had three or four hours of witnesses coming up saying what a good bloke he was."

Philip Nagle

Farrell was given a suspended sentence, with no jail time.

"There is no justice in that for the crimes that he committed, they were evil, they were violent, they were totally inappropriate"
for a man of God to be committing on students in his care," he said.

"The courts have got it wrong."

Like the four other abuse survivors, Mr Nagle has battled with relationship breakdowns and psychological trauma.

"I've had three marriages, three divorces, I'm a hard ass, I've got no friends," he said.

"I wish I could press the reset button and start it all over again."

Andrew Collins, 46, Mount Helen

Between the age of 11 and his teenage years, Andrew Collins said he was abused by four different men at Ballarat schools and churches.

"They were all sexual abuses involving anal rape, digital rape, fondling, harassment," he said.

As he got older, he began to realise that what he had endured was wrong.

But when he began speaking out, he was not believed.

"Unfortunately when I did start telling people I realised that children don't have a voice," he said.

"A priest is a powerful member of the community and some people just place them up on such a huge pedestal and it's very hard for people to believe that religious people could actually do that sort of stuff."

The fear, that's the stuff that still comes back in nightmares, that's the stuff that haunts you.

Andrew Collins

Mr Collins said when he thought about his school years, he felt like a terrified child again.

"The fear, that's the stuff that still comes back in nightmares, that's the stuff that haunts you."

Mr Collins said two of his abusers died before he was able to seek to bring them to justice.
First stage of Ballarat testimonies expected to last three weeks

Sex hearing set to start

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse will hear from people affected by child sexual abuse at the former St Alipius Christian Brothers School, St Alipius Primary, St Joseph’s Home, St Patrick’s College, the former St Patrick’s Christian Brothers Boys Primary School and other Catholic Church-run institutions.

Ms Gunn said CASSA counsellors would support survivors throughout the commission and had an open space at their headquarters where people can go to debrief during and after the hearings.

Catholic Education Office Ballarat director Audrey Broun also said people affected by the royal commission should seek help if needed.

“Be able to process trauma and grief, you need to acknowledge it, look at it, use it for what it is and accept it,” Mr Broun said.
ABUSE ROYAL COMMISSION

HEARINGS TO START

PAGES 4, 5

Courier
Ballarat are about to sit at the Ballarat Commission into Responses to Child Abuse at the St Alipius Christian Brothers School, St Alipius Parish, St Joseph's Home, St Patrick's College, the former St Patrick's Christian Brothers Boys Primary School and other Catholic Church-run institutions.

The Courier's investigation of this sordid topic has already uncovered some horrendous stories, none more tragic than revelations in 2012 that at least 40 Ballarat victims had taken their lives due the abuse suffered at the hands of priests including Robert Rest, Gerard Ridsdale, Bryan Coffey, Paul Ryan, and Edward Dowlan.

It is difficult to imagine that we could learn anything worse than this over the next three weeks.

The sad reality is that we more than likely will hear worse.

As lawyer Penny Savvidis, who represents many of the victims, said on Friday: “This is just the tip of the iceberg”, adding there were still many more victims.

“It was systemic abuse,” she said.

As many in the community have said, the information sure to be revealed during the inquiry will put Ballarat on the map for all the wrong reasons.

Our journalists will be at the forefront of reporting on the inquiry and will strive to provide readers with everything they need to know.

It will not be easy to report on and it will not be easy to read. But our community must know why, this happened.

We must also next.

The Courier publish a page of hope from reporter for detailing the importance up to the inquiry.

We hope readers turn to Monday should they require many avenues of...
ABUSE HEARINGS

ANDREW RAMAGE

St Joseph's Home, St Alphius who have been convicted of child sexual offences and a number of other institutions run by Catholic Church authorities in Ballarat. The commission said the purpose of the sitting was also to hear from Catholic clergy who wish to appear before the commission can fill out an application form available on the commission's website. Applications must be submitted by August 31.

CLERGY SEX OFFENDERS TO SPEAK AT ROYAL COMMISSION INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

ON WITH THE SHOW

Kur Thurman, Andy McCaig, Vanessa Belsar and Dylan Shalness will bring Miss Saigon to Ballarat for the first time in BLOC's production of the Vietnam war classic. Story page 6 Picture: KATE HEALY
CLERGY CHILD SEX ABUSE HEARING IN BALLARAT

TIME FOR VICTIMS

ON TUESDAY, the national spotlight will be shone on Ballarat’s horrific child sexual abuse scandal.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse will hold the first full hearing in Ballarat law courts – only the second hearing in Victoria which convicted priests are attending.

This week, local victims will take the stand, which will be a vital part of the inquiry.

Ballarat, as a community, needs to rally support behind these brave people and their families.

By telling their stories, they are exposing the horrendous events of the past, and for that alone we owe them our support.

REPORTS: Pages 4-5
SEX ABUSE TO HORRIFYING

FROM ONE CLASS HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE, ROYAL COMMISSION

FIONA HENDERSON

about abuse on the first day of the hearings that victims have described as a "carnage" that has fractured Ballarat.

Mr Nagle was repeatedly assaulted by disgraced priest Stephen Farrell when he was a grade five pupil.

"I always remove his glasses first," Mr Nagle said.

"It was a scary time. I couldn't work out what I was doing that made the abuse happen because the physical pain made it feel like I was being punished."

He said it was only when his lifestyle became very self-destructive that he reported the abuse to police, with Farrell sentenced to two years' jail in January 1997 on...
There are 33 boys in this Grade 4 photo. Twelve of them took their own lives.

*Trigger warning: This post includes graphic details of child sexual assault and may be triggering for some readers.*

Phillip Nagle is just one of countless victims of a paedophile ring operating in the regional Victorian city of Ballarat during the ’60s and ’70s. He was also the first of five victims called to give evidence at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which began its first public hearings in Ballarat this week.

While each account was disturbing, one faded old picture displayed by Mr Nagle to the courtroom perfectly encapsulated the torment caused by child sex abuse. Holding up the black-and-white photograph, 50-year-old Mr Nagle told the court: “I have a photograph of my Grade 4 class at St Alipius. There are 33 boys in that image. Of the 33 boys in that image, I know that 12 are dead.

“I believe they committed suicide.”

**Former pupil’s photo of tragic classmates who killed themselves**

A tragic class photo has been revealed where 12 out of the 33 of pupils pictured went on to commit suicide because of the sexual and physical abuse that took...
SPIDERS' PLAYGROUND
Royal commission to probe paedophile ring

RETURN TO THE HOUSE OF DEVILS
ROYAL COMMISSION INTO SEXUAL ABUSE
FULL COVERAGE PAGES 4-5
Pell tried to bribe me into silence: victim

Church scandal: Cardinal's behaviour questioned.

Distance no comfort from the stench of hell

Harrowing Ballarat sex abuse stories are all too familiar.

Practical philosophy for everyday living.

A TEN WEEK COURSE
BEGINNING 25 MAY 2015
Suffering, heartbreak revealed in heels

Orphanage survivor recalls his nightmare

HELP IS AVAILABLE

Victims of sexual abuse are urged to contact the Ballarat Centre Against Sexual Assault.
- CASA office (9am - 5:30pm) 5325 3033
- 24-hour crisis care 1800 806 292

If you are experiencing feelings of distress or depression, please contact a support service.
- BeyondBlue 1300 22 46 36
- Lifeline 13 11 14

Call for more support for abused
ROYAL COMMISSION INTO
SEXUAL ABUSE
FULL COVERAGE PAGES 4-5
Abused finally able to share their stories

Frightening school mass suicide toll

Victims encouraged to face their pain head-on

Disgraced priests to give evidence during trial

Something for Everyone

Every Sunday: 1 pm
Roberts St & Macquarie Rd

- Entertainment -
- Food Court -
Speaking shows bravery: CASA manager

The Centre Against Sexual Assault Ballarat has urged people affected by this week’s Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse to seek help if needed.

CASA manager Sharon Cram said the commission would stir up deep emotions in people who had disclosed sexual abuse and those who had yet to do so.

She also said the expected news that survivors would be able to give evidence to the commission was a step forward.

"Breaking the silence takes the power off the offender. It also keeps it alive," she said.

Did you attend one of these schools or institutions? Maybe you can help.

- Ballarat Orphanage/Ballarat Children’s Home
- Ballarat Reception Centre/Warraview
- St Joseph’s Sebasteopol
- Nazareth House
- St Alipius Parish Primary School
- St Patrick’s College Ballarat

Our law firm acts on behalf of a number of survivors who were abused while attending or in the care of one of these institutions in the Ballarat and surrounding region. We are seeking anyone to come forward who may have also attended one of these institutions and may have witnessed, or indeed suffered, abuse. If your story helps support theirs, it could help them in their fight for justice and compensation.

All inquiries are private and discreet. A court appearance is not required.

Contact us at 1300 306 441 or (03) 5331 7898, or email canyouhelp@rtt-law.com.au for a confidential discussion.

www.rtt-law.com/can-you-help Where you can see a full list of homes and institutions against which we are taking legal action in the Ballarat region.
A chance to unburden years of pain, suffering

Children come first in schools

Bishop praises victims, hopes for healing

Speaking shows bravery: CASA manager

Did you attend one of these schools or institutions? Maybe you can help.

- Ballarat Orphanage/Ballarat Children's Home
- Ballarat Reception Centre/Warrawee
- St Joseph's Home Sebastopol
- Nazareth House
- St Alipius Parish Primary School
- St Patrick's College Ballarat

Do you feel like you're going in circles looking for the best financial return?
CLERGY CHILD SEX ABUSE HEARING IN BALLARAT

TIME FOR VICTIMS

SMYTHESDALE'S MAMMOTH LOSS TO GORDON

SPORT
Wrongs of the past and going for...
... first week of the hearings;
Ballarat’s “loud fence”
Tie a LOUD (bright + colourful) ribbon to your front fence or letterbox to show your support of the multitudes of victims of child abuse at institutions at the recent Royal Commission and for all those who are still silenced due to fear in Ballarat and beyond. xo

#StaySilentNoLongerBallarat
John Mildren
“I just feel so sad that all this has happened, for the young people whose lives have been ruined. Robbed of innocence. Faith undermined. Horrifying.”

Stephen Waddington
“The sooner George Pell gets brought back here to answer, the better. To say I am disgusted by the actions of the perpetrators and those who covered up for them is an understatement.”

Carolyn Waddington
“So many people have lost direction because our leaders have abused our trust. We need to have all of this come out if we’re to have a future.”
Victims reveal sad betrayals of ‘confidante’ after brothers’ attacks

Pell stands by past statements

Student carried anger with him
ROYAL COMMISSION INTO SEXUAL ABUSE
FULL COVERAGE PAGES 4-5

BALLARAT TRADIES FIGHT BACK AFTER CRIME SPREE

WE’LL CATCH YOU!
Paedophile priest:

I had no restrictions

Sins of the fathers:
portrait of a monster as an old man
"I’ve come to the conclusion that, basically, I was wrong."
— Former deputy prime minister Wayne Swan has switched his position on same-sex marriage as new figures put federal Parliament less than a handful of votes away from backing the landmark reform.

Difficult week for Ballarat as horrific stories of abuse

This must surely be one of the longest weeks in Ballarat’s history. Sadly, our city is no stranger to the kind of terrible stories of abuse and neglect currently being shared by survivors speaking at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Several victims of abuse have shared their stories in the pages of The Courier in recent years – and many more awful details were made public during the Victorian inquiry in 2013.

But the horrific stories being heard at the hearing in Ballarat this week are some of the saddest and most shocking yet to come to light.

And this time, they will be given wider media coverage than ever before. The impact of the hearings on Ballarat will be huge – not just for survivors of abuse and their families and friends, not just for parishioners and Catholics, but for the entire community.

There is simply no way to face the horrors that are a part of our city’s history without feeling, at the very least, a sense of deep sadness. Also common may be feelings of anger, anxiety and disbelief.

It is important to remember the purpose of the commission is to seek justice for victims and try to ensure that such awful abuses never occur again. It is also important to take care of ourselves, and each other – and make use of the many support services which are available.

If you are feeling distressed, make sure to talk to your family members, friends, or contact one of the many support helplines available.
Understanding how abuse happened can help stop it

A week of what can only be described as horrific stories from the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sex Abuse, Monday’s sitting may appear to readers over as a day of relative respite.

But although the hearings were harrowing the suffering of individual victims that dominated last week, there was evidence that hinted at the more sinister possibility that predators were primarily drawn to the institutions because of the power they had over children.

Although many will dispute her claims, the inquiring nature of Professor Quadrio’s thinking lends itself to further investigation of how any institution could allow this deviance and, critically, how it can be prevented in future.

The commission must have several objectives if it is to fulfil its vital overarching role of addressing institutional sexual abuse in Australia.

The first is to provide a platform for victims to tell their stories. The cathartic release and vindication this allows cannot be overestimated.

And The Courier both applauds and supports those who have had the courage to do so.

But the commission also has the important role of seeking redress. How it uncovers the truth about what happened in Ballarat, which institutions exacerbated this, and to what degree, are key to fulfilling its long-term role in prevention.

Professor Quadrio’s evidence is not a complete answer, but it sheds light on the complex whys behind this horrendous abuse. Simplistic
Thinking of you during this difficult but important time in Ballarat’s trauma journey.

Thank you for your wonderful work.
We must not fail the victims of abuse

I AM a practising Catholic and wish to comment on the appalling revelations of the sexual abuse of children in Catholic schools and institutions over the past years.

It behoves all Catholics and others to read these reports and inform themselves of the degree of criminal abuse that has been perpetrated on so many young people.

The severity of abuse must be acknowledged before appropriate recompense and assistance can and should be provided to those victims who are still alive. Sadly, many are not, having been unable to live with the results of that evil.

Victims and their families must be listened to and heard. There must be no further attempt by church authorities to cover up or try to downplay these atrocities. There are no excuses for this type of behaviour and none must be given.

Distressing as it is for everyone, one of the most upsetting things is the knowledge that these paedophiles were, after having had complaints made about their behaviour, moved from parish to parish thus enabling them to further abuse young, innocent victims, over and over again.

No excuses for this are acceptable. It's not enough to say the perpetrators were sent off for treatment. They were then allowed to return and abuse the abuse. No excuse. We still don't know the full extent and probably never will, after all 'deacon's' and 'pastors' are usually shielded by church authorities from the law.
ROYAL COMMISSION INTO SEXUAL ABUSE

‘Elephant in the room’ evidence presented

Church came first: priest

Ridsdale to speak from jail

Shorten calls on Pell to attend

Church sexual abuse victims’ families

Culinary gloss, fix

Did you attend one of these schools or institutions? Maybe you can help.
Ridsdale's chilling evidence

Convicted paedophile priest Gerald Ridsdale has told the royal commission in Ballarat he "never had any restrictions or conditions" imposed on him as he was moved from parish to parish, abusing more than 100 children over 30 years.

China puts weapons on contentious islands

EXCLUSIVE

China has moved weaponry onto artificial islands that it is building in contested areas of the South China Sea, escalating the risks of a confrontation.
Pell may have known of abuse by Ridsdale

I never went there to fight, says IS defector

EXCLUSIVE
Rick McIntosh
Richard Baker

An Islamic State defector who worked a stint about whether Australians who have fled the terrorist group should be allowed to return has described the daughter of his estranged wife and said he wants to come back to Melbourne.

Adam Brooke, a father of four, said he was forced to join the group when he travelled to Syria as part of a birth last year.

Speaking exclusively to Fairfax Media from Turkey, Mr Brooke said he left the group after the personal exposure of his situation, including people being killed.

“I don’t agree with what they did at all,” he said.

“I don’t agree with those killing Muslims, and especially after they started recruiting non-Muslims and other innocent civilians.”

Mr Brooke confirmed to Fairfax he had previously met with a senior figure in Melbourne’s underworld but could not be identified.

He worked as a lawyer in Turkey, and provided humanitarian aid before going to Syria.

“I never went there to fight, I went there to save innocent people and the struggle of the Syrian people

If it was just military, I don’t think it was for the international community, I thought I could help.

Mr Brooke said he was then approached by journalists with the ABC and Fairfax to tell his story.
Unchecked path of a paedophile

Loud Fence march to show support for
Commission to church: We will call who we want

Warning signs about priest were ignored
Indonesia rebukes Abbott

Jewel Topfield
James Massola
David Wroe

The Indonesian government has rebuked Australia for refusing to resettle any of the thousands of Rohingya and Bangladeshi asylum seekers at the centre of the growing refugee crisis in south-east Asia.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott slammed the door shut on Australia resettling any of the asylum seekers, declaring: "Nope, nopes, nopes, we keep a very close regulative humanitarian program".

"I'm sorry. If you want to start a new life, you come through the front door, not through the back door."

But in a further escalation of diplomatic tensions between Canberra and Jakarta, just weeks after the execution of Australians Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesman Aloysius Nasir said Australia could not ignore the humanitarian crisis.

"My point is: countries that are parties to the convention on refugees have a responsibility to ensure they believe in what they sign," he said. "I hope all the countries that signed the refugee convention address the issue ... if you believe it when you sign it, you should act upon it."

The Deputy Speaker in the Indonesian House of Representatives, Fahri Hamzah, said Mr Abbott's comments were regrettable.

"Tony Abbott should not put the blame on the asylum seekers. They went on the boats because they were forced to do that," he said.

Indonesia is not a signatory to the UN convention, but Indonesia and Malaysia have agreed to provide humanitarian help to 7000 Bangladeshis. The terms and conditions of this refugee crisis still remain very tense.
Survivor warns of intensified pain in the aftermath of the hearing.

What's next for victims?

PATRICK BYRNE

THE pain felt by survivors of sexual abuse at the hands of paedophile priests will no doubt intensify after the royal commission ended on Friday.

Local survivor Andrew Collins gave two days of heart-wrenching evidence to the royal commission, and said the next chapter in his, and many other victims' lives, would be one of the toughest.

"It's a worry. We've been surrounded by a lot of support - the royal commission staff, CASA (Centre Against Sexual Assault) staff and each other - and we've still got guys tailing off and not being able to show up at all," he said.

“What happens next week when they've all disappeared to their houses?”

“We've got CASA, but the pressure on CASA is huge and they've been here every day with us and after hours as well.”

Mr Collins said many victims had found the ordeal difficult enough without the added pressure of seeking help - a view echoed by Towards Healing's Victorian director Kerry Buchecker.

Ms Buchecker said the Towards Healing process was established in 1996 to address allegations of sexual, physical and emotional abuse by clergy, religious or other people employed by or volunteering with official agencies of the Catholic Church.

“Towards Healing is acutely aware of the impact of the royal commission hearings convened in Ballarat over the last two weeks,” she said.

“Counselling for those affected by abuse, including family members, can be accessed through contacting Towards Healing. Persons affected by abuse can access private psychologists and counsellors, and financial assistance can be provided to cover the costs involved.”

Ms Buchecker encouraged anyone wishing to lodge a complaint about the Catholic Church to contact Towards Healing on 1800 816 030, adding that victims should also make a report to the Victoria Police service on 1800 333 000.

Ballarat Bishop Paul Bird, assured organiser, would continue to work with victims.

To contact centre Against Sexual Assault, located on Vale and Lonsdale Street, Sebastopol, or free call 24/7 38292. Lifeline on 13 11 14.

WHAT

MORE

Anger renewed in war of words

FIONA HENNES

A FEBRUARY 2013 meeting has ignited a war of words between Ballarat Bishop Paul Bird and clergy sexual abuse survivor Andrew Collins.

The meeting was held between Bishop Bird, Mr Collins and fellow survivor Peter Blenkiron to discuss the diocese footing the bill for the treatment of victims.

Mr Collins claimed the bishop continued to perform his role while undergoing treatment for his own mental health issues.

Bishop Bird insisted his attendance was a sign of his commitment to the diocese and its victims.

Mr Collins said the result was that the bishop would continue in his role while a non-clerical person was sent to meet with the survivor.

Bishop Bird confirmed in an interview with Collins that he had refused to step down until a non-clerical person was appointed to deal with matters involving the diocese.

"Making the appointment to the task was the moment he would get back in," Mr Collins said.
ROYAL COMMISSION INTO SEXUAL ABUSE
FULL COVERAGE PAGES 4-6

The Courier
Monday, May 25, 2015
A chance to unburden

Children come first in schools

Bishop praises victims, hopes for healing

years of pain, suffering

Redress needed for survivors

Speaking shows bravery: CASA manager

Did you attend one of these schools or institutions? Maybe you can help.

- Ballarat Orphanage/Ballarat Children’s Home
- Ballarat Reception Centre/Warrawee
- St Joseph’s Home Sebastopol
- Nazareth House
- St Alipius Parish Primary School
- St Patrick’s College Ballarat

Our ask is on behalf of victims or survivors who were abused while attending any of these institutions in the Ballarat and surrounding region. We are asking anyone who may have also attended these institutions in any capacity to please come forward and be interviewed by us. If your story helps support them, it could mean the world to them.

All interviews are private and discreet. A court appearance is not required.

For any confidential interviews, call
1300 268 197
For help or support, always call
1800 551 800

www.cvi.net.au
ALLARAT'S first Loud Fence march was not exactly loud, even if some of the colours on display were.

With flags of orange, green and purple flapping in the wind, between 100 and 200 people chatted quietly to one another as they walked from the Ballarat Law Courts to the median street in front of the Town Hall.

There were partners and family of those who were victims of institutional sexual abuse and had committed suicide as a result. There was also a small number of victims themselves, remembering friends they had lost in Ballarat institutions.

Still more were there to provide support and solidarity to those grieving. There was sadness and reflection on the lives of those who had been unable to cope with the crimes committed against them.

The message presented by those who organised the march was the time for silence — if there ever really was a time for silence — had long since past. It is time to speak loudly about the issue.

One of the organisers, Trish Harrison, said Loud Fence had only been running for a few weeks.

"It was a Facebook community started so people impacted by this could provide support or feel supported."

"It is not a statement of anger or a statement of judgment. It is to say it's time to end the silence."

At the statue of Queen Victoria, marchers were met by members of Ballarat’s Survivors of Suicide group. There they joined in the SOS group’s White Wreath Day commemoration.

Maureen Hatcher, who had attended St Alipius Parish School with Ms Harrison, acknowledged...
Show your support and march with the courageous victors

The last days of the Royal Commission’s current session of hearings in Ballarat have explored some murky times from the past of the mouths of even darker witnesses.

Even renowned paedophile Gerald Ridsdale’s recitvals for the absent voices in the hearings, it may come as no surprise that some of the evidence is now turning out to be contradictory.

Many of our readers will simply dismiss this as the worthless testimony of a man who has little remaining worth.

Much of the community may have already turned away from this news so painful are its revelations or so distasteful its details.

But many more sense its gravity and wait in hope for an outcome that has both resolution and a way forward.

Underlying the mess of half memories, destroyed records and inconclusive minutes is a far more worrying indication that the abuse of children was simply not taken seriously enough.

Recent evidence that a fellow priest walked in on a scene of abuse and did nothing hints that criminal behaviour was treated like some kind of professional impropriety, even a dismissible peccadillo.

People right up to the level of bishop seemed to have been preoccupied with reputation and any subsequent scandal.

It was as if the shame of the sordid dealings somehow engulfed the poor victims and removed from them the right to sympathy or compassion. The apparent indifference to these children under the wing of the church is flabbergasting to most modern readers and source of much anger. But even that anger at the commission must be directed to ascertain how a trusted organisation could get it so wrong.

One report of the 1982 meeting of senior priests maintains that former Bishop Ronald Mulkearns said in reference to Ridsdale, “We have a problem with homosexuality in this diocese”. If the quote is true it reveals an astonishingly misguided conception of where the problem lies and its nature.

Wherever the reader stands on this, The Courier maintains this issue is still of great importance.

The stories must continue to be told so that it will never be a new story again.

If the commission’s hearings were to present any epiphany then it was never going to get to it.

The Courier wholeheartedly supports the victims who bared their own pain so bravely to present evidence to the courageous honesty of the Royal Commission and the decades of this great suffering.

The community will have to fight tenaciously to show their empathy and support such a march.

It has not been an easy journey for them.
WE'LL STAND BY YOU

The royal commission into child sexual abuse has finished its first gruelling public hearing in Ballarat but the community was resolved to stand by the victims as hundreds turned out for a support march.

The cost to the community of the decades of abuse has been enormous in the number of reported suicides and in the ongoing impacts.

Catholic Bishop of Ballarat Paul Bird, in his evidence on Friday, said the church would struggle to pay the millions of dollars it expected to pay in compensation for 130 current substantiated claims against it.

But he said the church must not allow the tragedy caused by an "abuse of power" and poor understanding of the impact on victims to occur again.

Special reports pages 4-6

MAIN PICTURE: JEREMY BAINSHIRE

KIA

NEXT GENERATION
City reaches out in show of solidarity

72

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d will not
ough

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I have been very moved, very sorry, that as young children they endured such horrendous abuse. I'm sorry about the impact on their lives and their families.

Loud Fence helps break the silence

Gay McGrath

Gay McGrath

Gay McGrath
Ballarat CASA Men’s support group -

GROUP RULES

- Before joining the group each person will be required to have a one to one session with one of the group facilitators to assess their suitability or readiness to be in the group. In some instances, there may need to be some counselling sessions with a CASA counsellor prior to joining the group.

- We need to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to talk and feel listened to with respect.

- We need to keep details of your abuse to a minimum as it can be triggering for other people in the group. Your one to one counselling is the opportunity to discuss these details.

- If you want to explore your own experiences in depth, it is important that you are linked in to a counsellor.

- Attending a group meeting can be overwhelming at times. If you are feeling overwhelmed we would encourage you to speak to one of the facilitators or your counsellor.

- The group is only for survivors of sexual assault and isn’t available for carers. If you feel you are not able to be in the group without a carer, you may benefit from individual counselling.

Please note...

Developing friendships outside of the group is a common flow on effect from being part of a group. It is important to note though that being a trauma survivor can bring some vulnerability. To ensure safety we would discourage group members from accessing each other for debriefing or intensive support and advise that counsellors be used instead for this purpose.

Also to safeguard against possible harm we would urge you to discuss any concerns with the group facilitator.

If we are told that someone in the group is harming others, the concern will be raised with the CASA manager who may need to break confidentiality to ensure no further harm is caused.

(Dated February 2016)

A program of

Ballarat Health Services, Sebastopol Complex
(CASA located on Vale St Edwards St, Edwards St Entrance)

Phone (03) 5320 3933  Fax (03) 5320 3817
Website: www.casa.org.au
Former Ballarat bishop Ronald Mulkearns remembers ‘misbehaving’ priest

By ALICA THOMAS

July 29, 2015, 1:47 p.m.

Former Ballarat Bishop Ronald Mulkearns outside court in Geelong on Wednesday.
PICTURE: ALICIA THOMAS

FORMER Ballarat bishop Ronald Mulkearns has finally broken his silence about clergy sex abuse within the Catholic Church, telling a court he remembers a priest “misbehaving” in a sexual way.

Bishop Mulkearns was forced to give evidence against former priest Robert Claffey who has pleaded not guilty to a string of sexual assault charges.

Appearing in Geelong Magistrates Court on Wednesday, Bishop Mulkearns, now retired, underwent a compulsory examination revealing evidence about child sexual abuse for the first time in more than two decades.