



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

**PUBLIC HEARING INTO VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS RUN BY CATHOLIC CHURCH
AUTHORITIES IN AND AROUND BALLARAT**

CASE STUDY 28

OPENING ADDRESS BY SENIOR COUNSEL ASSISTING

INTRODUCTION

1. This is the 28th case study the subject of a public hearing by the Royal Commission. It is the first of two public hearings which will examine various institutions run by Catholic Church authorities in and around Ballarat, and the responses of those authorities to allegations of child sexual abuse and to the convictions of a number of priests and religious for child sexual offences.
2. This public hearing is primarily concerned with the impact of child sexual abuse on a number of survivors who were abused by Catholic clergy and religious in
 - a. St Joseph's Home in Ballarat, a children's home administered by the Sisters of Nazareth, a female Catholic religious order
 - b. St Alipius, a primary school within the Diocese of Ballarat staffed by Christian Brothers
 - c. St Alipius Parish, Ballarat East
 - d. St Patrick's College, a secondary school run by the Christian Brothers in Ballarat and
 - e. St Patrick's Christian Brothers Boys Primary School, Ballarat.

3. The impact of the abuse of children in these institutions on the community of Ballarat will also be a focus of inquiry.
4. The Royal Commission will examine the response of the Diocese of Ballarat and the Christian Brothers to survivors of child sexual abuse, their families and the community of Ballarat.
5. The Royal Commission's terms of reference include a requirement that it ensure that evidence that may be received by it, and that identifies particular individuals as having been involved in child sexual abuse or related matters, is dealt with in a way that does not prejudice current or future criminal proceedings. It is for this reason that this public hearing will not be inquiring into allegations of abuse at Ballarat Orphanage.
6. This public hearing will hear evidence from Gerald Francis Ridsdale, a former priest of the Diocese of Ballarat who is incarcerated following convictions for indecent assault, gross indecency and buggery of children in Victoria. His evidence will be given by video link.
7. Paul David Ryan was ordained as a priest in the Diocese of Ballarat in 1976. Ryan has given evidence at a private hearing before the Royal Commission and the transcript of that hearing will be tendered. Ryan has been convicted of three charges of indecent assault against one victim in Victoria.
8. I will say more about these offenders later.

The second hearing in Ballarat

9. The Royal Commission's investigations into institutions run by the Catholic Church in and around Ballarat are not complete. The Royal Commission will return to Ballarat towards the end of the year for the second Ballarat case study.

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat

10. The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat is geographically extensive. It has 51 parishes that cover the western third of Victoria. It extends from the Murray River in the north to the Southern Ocean in the south. In the west it is bound at the South Australian border by the Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Diocese of Port Pirie. In the east it is bound by the Diocese of

Sandhurst and the Archdiocese of Melbourne. The geographic area of the Diocese includes the City of Ballarat, which is located in the east of the Diocese.

11. James O'Collins was the bishop of the Diocese between 1941 and 1971. Ronald Mulkearns was the coadjutor bishop from 1968 until 1971 when he became the bishop of Ballarat. His vicars general were Father Frank Madden until 1976, Monsignor Leo Fiscalini until 1982 and Monsignor Henry Nolan until 1991. Father Brian Finnegan was in the position from 1991 until 1998.
12. Bishop Mulkearns retired in 1997 and was replaced by Bishop Peter Connors who held that position until August 2012. Bishop Paul Bird is the current bishop of Ballarat.
13. The College of Consultors is a group of priests who serve as an advisory body to the bishop in the pastoral care of the Diocese. From at least the 1960s, a Diocesan Consultors Committee ('the Consultors') over which the bishop presided, operated within the Diocese of Ballarat. Among other matters, the Consultors advised on the appointment and movement of priests in the Diocese.
14. Within the Ballarat Diocese is the parish of Ballarat East, also known as the St Alipius Parish, where the St Alipius Church, presbytery and St Alipius Parish School are located.

Christian Brothers in Ballarat

15. The Congregation of the Christian Brothers operated or provided teaching staff to schools within the geographic area of the Diocese, including within the City of Ballarat. A Christian Brothers community was resident at St Patrick's College in Ballarat.
16. St Alipius School was established in Ballarat East in the 1850s. In 1881, the Sisters of Mercy took over education of girls in the school. In 1888, the Christian Brothers established St Alipius Boys' School.
17. The Royal Commission will hear evidence that in the 1970s, the girls' school was coeducational from preparatory until grade two. Once boys completed

grade two, they would attend the boys' school. The boys' school was known formally as St Alipius Boys' School and is often referred to as St Alipius Primary School.

18. Between 1971 and 1974, at St Alipius Boys' School, Brother Fitzgerald was the grade three teacher, Brother Dowlan and Brother Farrell were the grade five teachers and Brother Best was the grade six teacher and headmaster. Gerald Ridsdale was the assistant priest and school chaplain in 1972 and 1973.
19. Each of those Brothers, except Brother Fitzgerald who died in 1987, has been convicted of child sexual offences in relation to children who attended the school.
20. In 1976, St Alipius Boys' School closed. Since that time St Alipius Parish School has catered for boys and girls until grade six.

IMPACT

21. The Royal Commission has been working in the Ballarat community over the past 18 months. Royal Commissioners and Commission staff have met with community leaders, local police, health and support services, politicians and advocates as well as survivors and their families. Community forums have been held.
22. In these meetings and forums Ballarat community members have described wide ranging impacts of systemic institutional child sexual assault including
 - a. significant social, health and mental health issues for survivors
 - b. a large number of reported suicides and premature deaths
 - c. neglect and shunning of victims by their own families, and the institutions in which they were abused
 - d. a loss of faith and connectedness to the Catholic Church communities and
 - e. a lack of community cohesion.

23. In this case study there will be evidence from the Centre Against Sexual Assault in Ballarat and Moving Towards Justice, an independent movement of lay people in the Diocese of Ballarat which seeks to support victims of sexual abuse and to promote healing within the Church.
24. For the first time, the Royal Commission will hear evidence from a psychiatrist who has particular expertise in the assessment and management of trauma and abuse and the consequences of child and adult sexual abuse including abuse by religious.
25. Associate Conjoint Professor Carolyn Quadrio will give evidence about the literature attesting to the wide ranging psychological and physical effects, both long and short term, of child sexual abuse. She is expected to say that post-traumatic stress is common in adult survivors of child sexual abuse and describe the common physical symptoms in young children.
26. Associate Conjoint Professor Quadrio will also give evidence about the spiritual effects of child sexual abuse on children and their family, and the ripple effects which may lead to ostracism of victims within their religious communities. The support needed for survivors will also be addressed.

SURVIVORS

27. The Royal Commission will hear from 17 men, each of whom was abused as a child at a Catholic institution in Ballarat.
28. Each is expected to speak about the impact of the abuse on their lives from their schooling and work history through to their marriages and relationships with their children. The impact on their parents and siblings and the effect on their faith will also be the subject of evidence. One witness is expected to say that his siblings have told him that they despise the Church and have lost their faith after being heavily involved in the Church for three generations.
29. The Royal Commission will hear that the impact of child sexual abuse is ongoing. Many witnesses are expected to say that they continue to suffer from mental health issues and that they have attempted suicide as a result of the abuse they experienced as children.

30. Some common themes are expected to arise from their evidence, including feelings of guilt and humiliation, a feeling of under achievement or loss of potential, struggles with substance abuse, disruptive behaviour, distrust, withdrawal, learning difficulties and problems in employment and financial matters.
31. The Royal Commission is expected to hear evidence from ten witnesses that they were sexually abused at St Alipius Boys' School.
32. The Royal Commission is expected to hear seven witnesses say they were sexually abused at St Patrick's College, Ballarat. Most of these allegations relate to abuse by Brother Edward Dowlan, who was sentenced in March this year in relation to 34 charges of indecent assault and gross indecency for abusing young boys between 1971 and 1985.
33. Former students of St Patrick's College and St Alipius Boys' School are expected to give evidence that there was an awareness of risk of sexual abuse among students and some staff members about Brothers Best, Fitzgerald and Dowlan, and Father Ridsdale.
34. A witness given the pseudonym BAC is expected to give evidence that when he first commenced school at St Alipius Boys' School, he was told by other boys to avoid Brother Best and to never let him get you alone. He was also told to be careful around Brother Fitzgerald. He understood this to mean that they would hurt children.
35. Paul Auchetl is expected to give evidence that other children warned him not to get out of the car with Father Ridsdale when they went on trips together. He is also expected to give evidence that he felt his teacher in grade five at St Alipius Boys' School was warning him when he talked to a group of boys about 'sticking together and being aware of how queens behaved'.
36. Timothy Green is expected to give evidence that children at St Patrick's used to snigger about Brother Dowlan's behaviour, and say things like, 'He's touching the kids again'. He is expected to say that it was common

knowledge among the students in his year that Brother Dowlan was abusing many of the boys at the school but that this was not discussed.

37. Timothy Green is expected to say that he finds it inconceivable that none of the Brothers, lay teachers, nurses or even some of the parents knew about the abuse by Brother Dowlan. He is expected to say, 'it was just so blatantly obvious and every boy in the class knew that their turn was going to come up at some stage'.
38. The Royal Commission will hear evidence from a survivor who is expected to say he was sexually abused at St Joseph's Home, an orphanage in Ballarat run by the Sisters of Nazareth. Gordon Hill is expected to give evidence that he tried to explain to a doctor and a police officer that he had been sexually abused at the Home after ending up in hospital. He was told about the abuse, 'nobody does that sort of thing'. From that day on, he trusted no one.
39. The Royal Commission will hear evidence from several survivors who are expected to say that they have contemplated suicide or struggled with suicidal thoughts as a result of the sexual abuse they suffered as children. In addition, it is expected that several witnesses will tell the Royal Commission that they know of others who they believe suffered sexual abuse as children and who they believe later went on to die prematurely or commit suicide.
40. Helen Watson will give evidence about her son Peter's experience. She is expected to say that he was abused by a Catholic priest in the Ararat presbytery. He did not disclose to his mother for some time. After a period of being in and out of jobs and psychiatric hospitals he eventually took his own life, three years after telling his mother.
41. The Royal Commission will also hear evidence that one survivor has a photograph of the 1974 grade four class at St Alipius Boys' School. Of the 33 boys shown in the photograph, this survivor is expected to tell the Royal Commission that 12 are dead and that he believes suicide to be the cause of death.

Reluctance to disclose

42. Many witnesses are expected to say that they were reluctant to disclose their abuse to anyone. They are expected to give reasons such as feelings of shame, guilt, disgust, fear of punishment, fear of judgment and a belief that they would be disbelieved.
43. The witness given the pseudonym BAB is expected to say that he did not disclose his abuse at the time that it occurred because his parents were such an integral part of the Catholic community and he did not want to shake their faith or devastate them. He did not want them to know that they had put him in a position where sexual abuse could happen, even though he knew they had no role in that.
44. Andrew Collins is expected to say:

Ballarat is a very Catholic town, and the Catholic community is very closed. The Catholic culture is very strong. Coming forward and talking publicly about child sexual abuse in Catholic institutions not only has repercussions at the family level, but also at the business and social level in Ballarat. It is these impacts that stop other victims from coming forward.

CHURCH AUTHORITY WITNESSES

45. The Royal Commission will hear evidence from Bishop Paul Bird, the current Bishop of Ballarat about what he has done to address the impact of child sexual abuse in the Diocese.
46. The Provincial Leader of the Christian Brother Oceania Province, Peter Clinch, will give evidence about the Christian Brothers in Victoria, the involvement of the Christian Brothers in schools in Ballarat and the response of the Order to criminal convictions of Brothers for child sexual abuse.
47. The current Parish Priest of St Alipius, Father McInerney will give evidence about his views on the impact on the community of sexual abuse of children by clergy.

SOURCE OF DOCUMENTS

48. The Royal Commission compelled the production of a range of documents for the purpose of this case study. Catholic Church Insurances Limited provided insurance for the Diocese of Ballarat at the relevant time. When claims were made to the Diocese about the conduct of Ridsdale, Catholic Church Insurances arranged for investigators to conduct interviews with people within the Diocese and elsewhere who were likely to have information relevant to the claims made.
49. Transcripts of interviews held for this purpose were produced and form part of the tender bundle. Those transcripts detail interviews with, among others Ridsdale, Bishop Ronald Mulkearns, Father Brian Finnegan, the former vicar general of the Diocese of Ballarat, Father Eugene McKinnon, the former parish priest of Edenhope and Monsignor Henry Nolan, the former parish priest of Warrnambool.

RIDSDALE

Convictions

50. On 27 May 1993, Gerald Ridsdale pleaded guilty in the Magistrates Court of Victoria at Melbourne to 27 offences against children involving eight victims. He was sentenced to two years and three months imprisonment, suspended after three months. He was released from custody on 26 August 1993.
51. On 6 August 1994, Ridsdale pleaded guilty in the County Court of Victoria to a further 46 offences committed against children. These offences were committed over 20 years between 1961 and 1981 and involved 21 victims aged between nine and 15 years. On 14 October 1994, Ridsdale was sentenced to 18 years imprisonment with a non-parole period of 15 years.
52. On 11 August 2006, Ridsdale pleaded guilty in the County Court of Victoria to a further 35 offences against children aged between six or seven to 15 years old. The offences occurred over 17 years between 1970 and 1987. He was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment with a non-parole period of 7 years.
53. On 8 April 2014, Ridsdale pleaded guilty in the County Court of Victoria to a further 30 offences against 14 children aged between four and 13 years

old, including three female victims. The offences occurred over 19 years between 1961 and 1980. He was sentenced to eight years imprisonment with a non-parole period of five years.

54. Ridsdale will be eligible for parole on 8 April 2019. He will be almost 85 years old.

History of offending

55. The evidence about his history of offending is expected to be as follows.
56. Ridsdale began offending against children, mainly boys, between 1954 and 1958 when he was in the seminary at Corpus Christi.
57. Ridsdale abused children at parishes or church locations throughout Victoria. These include Horsham, Inglewood, Camperdown, Ballarat North parish (including institutions such as Nazareth House and St Joseph's Home), Mildura, Swan Hill, Warrnambool, Ballarat East (including institutions such as St Alipius Boy's School), Apollo Bay, Inglewood again, Edenhope, the National Pastoral Institute in Melbourne, Mortlake and Horsham parish.
58. In addition, he offended against an altar boy from a parish in Sydney.
59. Why and by whom he was moved from parish to parish will begin to be explored in the evidence in this first hearing in Ballarat.
60. In the early 1960s Ridsdale was at North Ballarat as an assistant priest. Ridsdale molested a boy from Villa Maria, a boarding school for boys in East Ballarat. It was his first year as a priest. A complaint by the boy's parents was made to the Bishop, Bishop O'Collins. It was the first complaint Ridsdale knew of.
61. Ridsdale told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that Bishop O'Collins told him there had been a complaint and said 'if this thing happens again then you are off to the Missions'. Bishop O'Collins sent him to Mildura. There is expected to be evidence that Bishop O'Collins referred Ridsdale to a psychiatrist.

62. The next time Ridsdale spoke to a bishop about his offending, was to Bishop Mulkearns in 1975. The evidence is expected to reveal that that came about in the following way.
63. Ridsdale was appointed parish priest of Apollo Bay Parish in 1974. He sexually abused boys in that parish. Ridsdale told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that he left Apollo Bay in February 1975 because he was confronted by a man who accused him of interfering with children. Ridsdale put in for a transfer.
64. The Consultors minutes record the decision to move him to Inglewood in 1975. The Consultors present at that meeting were Bishop Mulkearns, Father F Madden, Vicar General, Monsignors Fiscalini, O'Brien, W McMahan, O'Keefe, McKenzie and McInerney and Fathers P Calligan, W Mellican and K Arundell.
65. Ridsdale was in Inglewood from February 1975 until late 1975 or early 1976. Ridsdale was later convicted of offending against nine children while parish priest at Inglewood. The Royal Commission has had contact from another two people reporting sexual abuse by Ridsdale during his time there.
66. The evidence is expected to show that Ridsdale told Bishop Mulkearns in 1975 to expect a complaint by a parent that Ridsdale had interfered with his son. That parent was a police officer. A complaint was made to Bishop Mulkearns whose response was to send Ridsdale for counselling by a Franciscan priest, Father Peter Evans. Bishop Mulkearns kept no notes of that referral.
67. Then Father, now Mr Evans was contacted by Victoria Police in 1995. The police record him as having told them that he did not see Ridsdale in a professional sense for counselling.
68. I will say more about the treatment Ridsdale received.
69. Catholic Church Insurances did not indemnify the Diocese of Ballarat for any claims arising from events after 31 December 1975, presumably

because of the knowledge Bishop Mulkearns had of Ridsdale's offending from that time.

70. In January 1976, the Consultors meeting minutes record Ridsdale as being appointed temporarily to Bungaree until the end of February. Most of the Consultors present were at the 1975 meeting when Ridsdale was moved to Inglewood.
71. The same minutes record that Bishop Mulkearns discussed the need for confidentiality and that 'some matters had arisen in the diocese which might make it advisable to delay making any appointments. At this stage moves should be kept to a minimum'.
72. In March 1976, Ridsdale was appointed to Edenhope as an administrator, and then in January 1977 as the parish priest. Each appointment was discussed with the Consultors. Bishop Mulkearns has said that the appointment to Edenhope was based on advice from Father Evans, however he did not keep any record of that communication.
73. No record has been produced indicating any condition or restriction was placed on Ridsdale when he was appointed to Bungaree or Edenhope.
74. Ridsdale was convicted of offending against 13 children while parish priest at Edenhope. The Royal Commission has had contact from an additional 11 persons reporting sexual abuse by Ridsdale during his time there.
75. Monsignor Henry Nolan was a priest at Edenhope less than two years after Ridsdale. He told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that no one told him about Ridsdale's activities.
76. Father McKinnon became parish priest of Edenhope in July 1991. He told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that he knew as a priest coming into the area about Ridsdale abusing children. He told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that 'that was just what we talked about as priests and so on'.
77. Ridsdale took a year off in 1980 to study at the National Pastoral Institute in Melbourne. He offended there.

Mortlake

78. Ridsdale was appointed parish priest of Mortlake in January 1981. The Consultors present at the meeting where this was decided were Bishop Mulkearns, Monsignor Fiscalini and Fathers McKenzie, Downes, Arundell, Frank Madden and Melican. Father Pell was an apology.
79. Ridsdale was a prolific offender during this appointment. There will be evidence that his behaviour around boys was no secret in Mortlake.
80. Father Brian Finnegan was the bishop's secretary in 1981 and 1982. He told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that he had received complaints about Ridsdale's being over-friendly with boys at Mortlake and confronted Ridsdale about those complaints. He reported that Ridsdale was 'most crestfallen'.
81. There were at least two reports to Bishop Mulkearns from different sources about Ridsdale's offending in Mortlake.
82. Monsignor Fiscalini was the Vicar General of the Diocese of Ballarat until July 1982. In that capacity he was approached by a parent distressed about their child being sexually molested by Ridsdale. He told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that he reported it to Bishop Mulkearns and Ridsdale was removed.
83. The principal of the school, a nun, told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that she was told by one of the parents that Ridsdale was abusing 'half the boys in the school'. She spoke with Sister Vagg, the superior at the convent. Sister Vagg then rang the Bishop who told her to tell Ridsdale about the complaint, so that he would stop. She did that, and she said that Ridsdale said he did not know why it had come up at that stage.
84. The evidence is likely to reveal that Monsignor Nolan was told by Bishop Mulkearns, after Bishop Mulkearns spoke to the nuns, to go to Mortlake. Monsignor Nolan recalled to the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that while he was at Mortlake, a boy might have been staying in the

presbytery. Monsignor Nolan said when he raised it with Ridsdale, Ridsdale said, 'what's the problem'.

85. A transcript of an interview Bishop Mulkearns had with the Catholic Church Insurances investigator in 1993, records him as saying there were complaints of inappropriate behaviour with young children, boys from Mortlake, 'so he was taken out of there'. He told the investigator:

I know there were specific complaints that he was engaging in inappropriate behaviour with young children and I think, boys. As I said there were no specific complaints made, but there was an approach to Monsignor Fiscalini, who was Vicar General at the time by people from Mortlake, complaining about his behaviour and there was also a Doctor in Mortlake who contacted me about it and that people were concerned about what was going on.

86. In a further interview in 1994, Bishop Mulkearns said that two parents from Mortlake came to see him on 11 and 12 August 1982. On 15 August he went to Mortlake for a confirmation. On that visit he became aware that a boy was living at the presbytery. He did not think it appropriate. He did not confront Ridsdale about it. He said there was no suggestion that there had been any interference 'whatsoever' with that boy in the house.
87. The principal told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that she was forbidden by the Bishop to speak to the rest of the staff about what had happened. She said she told the Bishop something should be done for the children and he said there would be nothing done because that would admit guilt.
88. Ridsdale was referred by Bishop Mulkearns for counselling from Father Augustine Watson, described by Bishop Mulkearns as a 'Franciscan Priest Psychologist'. No notes of this referral have been produced to the Royal Commission.
89. Bishop Mulkearns told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that he did not take it as his position to report Ridsdale to the police.

90. Ridsdale was discussed at the Consultors' meeting on 14 September 1982. Present at that meeting were Bishop Mulkearns, Monsignor Leo Fiscalini and Fathers Henry Nolan VG, George Pell, David Arundell, J Martin and E Bryant. The minutes of that meeting note the following under the heading 'staffing':

The Bishop advised that it had become necessary for Fr Gerald Ridsdale to move from the Parish of Mortlake. Negotiations are under way to have him work with the Catholic Enquiry Centre in Sydney. A new appointment to Mortlake will be necessary to take effect after October 17th.

91. The minutes do not disclose what the Bishop said about why it became necessary. However, as indicated earlier, it is expected that there will be evidence that Bishop Mulkearns knew it was because Ridsdale had abused boys in Mortlake, and that he had offended in this manner in 1975. Several of the Consultors had been present at meetings of, or were members of the College of Consultors on each occasion in the past when Ridsdale had been moved.

92. After Ridsdale was removed from Mortlake, the Consultors agreed that as no one had applied for the position of parish priest there, Father Denis Denehy be appointed as Mortlake parish priest from 23 October 1982.

93. Father McKinnon told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that Father Denehy had told him the following: on his first night there, Father Denehy was stood up against the wall by four parents who told him if he interfered with any of the kids he would be gutted. Father Denehy was told that Ridsdale had attempted to molest nearly every boy in the school. Father Denehy organised counselling from a non-Catholic source for parents.

94. Father Denehy told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that he thought every male child between the ages of ten years and sixteen years who was at the school was molested by Ridsdale.

Catholic Enquiry Centre, Sydney

95. On 15 November 1982, Ridsdale was moved to the Catholic Enquiry Centre in Sydney. A priest was needed to answer the written enquiries of a

correspondence course offered. Bishop Mulkearns offered the services of Ridsdale to the Centre.

96. Father Fitzpatrick was the director of the Centre. Father Fitzpatrick and Ridsdale lived at the Centre with a housekeeper.
97. Father Fitzpatrick told the Catholic Church Insurances lawyer that Bishop Mulkearns had told him the transfer was as a result of sexual matters. He also said that Bishop Mulkearns told him that before Ridsdale came to Sydney Ridsdale had trouble with little boys and he wanted him out of the situation in the Diocese of Ballarat.
98. In his 1994 interview with the Catholic Church Insurances investigator, Bishop Mulkearns said that Father Fitzpatrick was advised of the problem, 'but I just cannot remember who else was advised'.
99. The secretary of the Centre told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that Father Fitzpatrick had been told that there was some sort of problem with Ridsdale and a young boy in Ballarat which is why they preferred to have him out of their diocese.
100. On 19 November 1982, Bishop Carroll granted Ridsdale faculties of the Archdiocese of Sydney for the duration of his stay. The Archbishop of Sydney at that time was Cardinal Freeman.
101. In early 1983, Archbishop Clancy became Archbishop of Sydney. A summary of what Cardinal Clancy told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator in 1993, records that Bishop Mulkearns had taken him aside at the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference meeting in 1983 and explained that Ridsdale had certain sexual problems and was under professional treatment. Ridsdale had come to Sydney to get away from the problems in Victoria.
102. Cardinal Clancy said he accepted Ridsdale on the same basis that Cardinal Freeman had. That is, that he would work at the Centre, that he would not be in contact with children and he would continue with his counselling. No notes were taken of the discussions between Bishop Mulkearns and the Cardinal.

103. Cardinal Clancy is recorded as having also told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that letters involving transfers often did not include explicit details of the reasons the transfer was taking place.
104. There is expected to be evidence that the secretary of the Centre told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that Father Fitzpatrick used to go away for weekends and that many children visited Ridsdale at the Centre while he was away. Occasionally, she said, children stayed overnight. They were mainly young boys and Ridsdale regularly used to take an unaccompanied boy and girl to White Cliffs in NSW, usually for school holidays. White Cliffs was where Ridsdale had a holiday home.
105. Father Fitzpatrick told the Catholic Church Insurances lawyer that his job was not to supervise Ridsdale out of hours.
106. The Centre was across the road from a primary school.
107. Within 12 months, the secretary said Ridsdale had established a 'firm friendship' with the Maroubra Beach Parish. He also had a Prayer Group. He offended against a boy who was part of that group.
108. Marika Gubacsi was the President of the Yarra Bay Eucharistic Prayer Community. In 1993 she signed a statement that in early 1983, Ridsdale was celebrating Mass at Yarra Bay and BAO became his altar boy. This was at a time when one of the conditions on which he was in Sydney was no contact with children. There is expected to be no evidence that he was supervised or limited in any way as to the work he carried out while at the Centre.
109. Ridsdale told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that while he was in Sydney he relieved at the Bulli Parish, in the Diocese of Wollongong, for three consecutive weekends. BAO came and stayed with him on at least two of those weekends, and Ridsdale offended against him.
110. Father Fitzpatrick told the Catholic Church Insurances lawyer that Ridsdale did some parish supply work at his instigation on one or two occasions, and that any other parish supply work was of a private nature, and not known to him.

111. In June 1983, Father Fitzpatrick asked Bishop Mulkearns to allow Ridsdale to stay for a further year. This request was approved at the Consultors meeting on 8 August 1983, which included Bishop Mulkearns, Monsignor L Fiscalini, Vicar General Father Henry Nolan, Fathers G Pell, Arundell and J Martin. These members had been present at the meeting where Bishop Mulkearns advised that Ridsdale had to leave Mortlake.

112. Father Fitzpatrick is recorded as having told the Catholic Church Insurances lawyer that by mid-1984, he had heard a number of things about Ridsdale which made him suspicious. He told Bishop Mulkearns about those things, although at the time of the interview in 1993 he could not remember what they were. He remembers saying words to the effect that 'something should be done about this. I can't be his therapist.'

113. Father Fitzpatrick said that Bishop Mulkearns responded in a letter dated 3 September 1984. In that letter, Bishop Mulkearns wrote:

I might add that I had a good discussion with him about the problem which arose early in the year and of which we spoke prior to your departure for overseas. He was quite open about the situation and said that he has discussed it with the Melbourne priest who is advising him and certainly hopes that it is not something which will crop up again.

114. In 1985, Bishop Mulkearns wrote to Father Fitzpatrick and said that he contacted Father Augustine Watson about the possibility of Ridsdale helping out in one or more of the parishes close to the Centre. He also spoke with Bishop Heaps and Archbishop Clancy. They approved this plan.

115. The Archdiocese of Sydney Consultors meeting minutes of 4 December 1985 state 'Mention was also made of Rev. G. Ridsdale's availability during 1986 to work in the diocese. He could possibly help at Narraweena until a new pastor appointed.'

116. By December 1985, Father Fitzpatrick said that he had been told that a boy stayed the night at the Centre. He contacted Bishop Mulkearns and said 'I want him out of here'. Ridsdale left the Centre by the end of that year.

117. Notwithstanding these complaints, Ridsdale was appointed to Woy Woy Parish as an assistant priest in January 1986, and as the administrator of Forestville in April 1986 for six weeks. Both of these parishes were in the Archdiocese of Sydney. Bishop Mulkearns said he thought it would not be a problem for Ridsdale to go to a parish because he had been in counselling for two years.

Horsham

118. Ridsdale then returned to Victoria and was appointed assistant priest in Horsham from July 1986. Ridsdale was appointed to Horsham on the advice of Father Augustine Watson, because Ridsdale was friends with Father Frank Madden who was the parish priest of Horsham.

119. In a 1993 interview with the Catholic Church Insurances investigator, Father Madden said that when Ridsdale was appointed to Horsham in July 1986, he 'knew that he had been in some sort of trouble, but I was not told what had occurred and I really did not want to know'.

120. Father Madden also said, 'I did not know his prior history and what I did know was, that he had had some trouble and he had had counselling, I believe, and he was supposedly quite fit for Parish work'. He said he became aware of Ridsdale's propensity towards young boys when Ridsdale was transferred from Horsham Parish in 1989.

121. Bishop Mulkearns explained the decision to appoint Ridsdale to the Horsham Parish. He told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that Father Watson advised that it would be 'a responsible thing to put him back into parish work'. Again no notes were taken of this discussion. Bishop Mulkearns also said that 'we did not know anything that had happened in Sydney'. That statement is not consistent with the expected evidence which is set out above.

122. This appointment to Horsham was discussed with the Consultors, most of whom were present at the 1982 meeting where Bishop Mulkearns revealed that it had become necessary to move Ridsdale from Mortlake.

123. A written complaint was received by Bishop Mulkearns in August 1987 about Ridsdale's offending against BAE while in Horsham Parish. The abuse occurred at White Cliffs. Ridsdale was not moved from the Parish for about another six months, and then only after Bishop Mulkearns received a letter from BAE's solicitor.
124. It was not until April 1988 that Ridsdale stepped down from parish work. Bishop Mulkearns advised his Vicar General and the Consultors in similar terms to his description of why Ridsdale had to move from Mortlake. That is, it became necessary to remove him from parish ministry.
125. Ridsdale's faculties were suspended in June 1988 for 12 months.
126. Thirteen years had passed since Bishop Mulkearns first knew that Ridsdale was sexually abusing boys he met during his work as a priest. Ridsdale had been at some nine parishes and other church locations during this time and abused more than 50 children.
127. Ridsdale will not be asked about the details of his offending conduct nor will the names of those he offended against be revealed. The questioning will concern his formation and what shaped him early in his religious life, who he told about his offending, who spoke to him about complaints, and what was done as a result of those complaints or disclosures.
128. In 1995, Victoria Police investigated allegations that Bishop Mulkearns may have committed offences in relation to concealing a felony or a serious indictable offence. Although the police found that there was evidence that Bishop Mulkearns was aware that criminal offences were committed by Ridsdale, they found that there was no evidence to support charging him with a concealing offence.

Treatment

129. As has been indicated, from 1961 and particularly between 1975 and 1990 Ridsdale is reported as having received treatment from a number of practitioners or institutions. Who sent him and why, and with what effect, will begin to be addressed in the evidence.

130. Ridsdale told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that he was not sent to a doctor by Bishop O'Collins in the early 1960s following a complaint made during his first year as a priest. However, there is expected to be evidence that Bishop Mulkearns removed from Ridsdale's file and destroyed a letter sent by a psychiatrist, Dr R E Seal, to Bishop O'Collins.
131. Bishop Mulkearns is recorded as having destroyed this letter before Ridsdale was charged and before Bishop Mulkearns himself was interviewed by the Catholic Church Insurances investigator. In a memorandum he signed, Bishop Mulkearns said he did that because he thought the letter was 'privileged', and because he had in mind the effect on other priests of the diocese if the documents were made public.
132. Bishop Mulkearns said that the letter made no reference to the reason Ridsdale had been referred to Dr Seal by Bishop O'Collins. He recalled that the letter said that Dr Seal had seen Ridsdale and was confident that, with appropriate care, he could function as a priest in the future. The letter was dated in the early to mid-sixties.
133. Bishop Mulkearns has said that he sent Ridsdale for counselling shortly after Ridsdale admitted to offending against a boy at Inglewood in 1975. The evidence is likely to reveal that Ridsdale was initially sent to Father Peter Evans for one week of treatment which Ridsdale described as 'simply relaxation technique stuff'.
134. There is expected to be evidence that Peter Evans told Victoria Police in 1995 that he did not treat Ridsdale in a professional capacity. Mr Evans thought it likely that Ridsdale attended a 'retreat' which he described as a 'drop in centre'.
135. In his 1995 interview with the Catholic Church Insurances investigator, Bishop Mulkearns reported that Ridsdale was first sent to Father Evans and then to Father Watson for counselling. He reported, 'I only appointed him after I was given assurance that he was ready to be appointed again. However, I am not sure who gave the assurance.' Specifically, he said that he was not sure whether it was Father Evans, or Ridsdale himself, who had told him that Father Evans had said that Ridsdale could be appointed again.

That advice was not given in writing and Bishop Mulkearns did not make a record of this telephone conversation.

136. Ridsdale then was appointed to Edenhope. In his 1993 interview with the Catholic Church Insurances investigator, Bishop Mulkearns reported that to his knowledge Ridsdale was having counselling while he was at Edenhope. The evidence is expected to be that Ridsdale commenced counselling again after he left Mortlake Parish.
137. In 1982, following his departure from Mortlake Parish, Ridsdale received counselling from Father Watson. The evidence is expected to be that this counselling continued, off and on, until Ridsdale travelled to the United States of America for treatment in late 1989.
138. In a 1989 letter to Bishop Mulkearns, Father Watson described the methodology he used with Ridsdale as being based on the work of Victor Frankl and drawing together emotional, rational and spiritual dimensions. He said:

I do not believe that this – or any other serious problem – can be resolved purely by psychology. At the best, psychology is only a useful tool. And I am sure that Frankl’s Logotherapy is the best available, mainly because he insists that man is essentially a spiritual being and that the most prevalent psychological illness in the modern world is a spiritual neurosis. Therefore, the ultimate solution is in our Faith, if thoroughly understood and practised.
139. Bishop Mulkearns told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that on at least two occasions he consulted with Father Watson regarding Ridsdale’s placements. Bishop Mulkearns suggests he discussed with Father Watson the possibility of Ridsdale helping out in one or more parishes close to the Catholic Enquiry Centre in Sydney.
140. Bishop Mulkearns also said that he consulted with Father Watson about placing Ridsdale in Horsham in 1986. In his 1994 interview with the Catholic Church Insurances investigator, Bishop Mulkearns said that Father Watson had advised that it would be ‘a responsible thing to put him back into parish work’.

141. No records have been produced of any discussion between Bishop Mulkearns and Father Watson about these matters.
142. In a 1989 letter to Bishop Mulkearns, Father Watson wrote 'I insisted that he [Ridsdale] should see a spiritual director regularly, and this worked well while he was in Sydney and had a director available.' He also wrote, 'at one stage, I think I did not see him [Ridsdale] at all for something like 12 months'.
143. From November 1989 until September 1990, Ridsdale attended a residential program at a centre run by the Servants of the Paraclete in New Mexico. The director of the centre informed Bishop Mulkearns that the program was both psychological and spiritual.
144. The psychological component was reported as involving both individual and group therapies, while the spiritual component was reported as involving spiritual direction and both common and personal prayer. At the end of his time in New Mexico, staff of the centre, including a spiritual director, art therapist and psychodramatist made positive comments about Ridsdale's progress while at the centre.
145. The director of the centre sent regular reports on Ridsdale to Bishop Mulkearns, however requested that these reports be either returned or destroyed. None of these reports have been produced to the Royal Commission.
146. The evidence is likely to reveal that an Australian psychiatrist, Professor Richard Ball, commented in 1993 that none of the treatment at this centre was behavioural, that there was limited specific attention to sexual matters and that much exploration and monitoring was by self-report.
147. Professor Ball also reported that the centre had either been closed or markedly reduced in activity and was itself under litigation in relation to the abnormal sexual behaviour of someone who was there at the same time as Ridsdale.

148. All of the treatment that Ridsdale received was within the confines of the Catholic Church. In 1993, Professor Ball observed that this was a common approach of the Catholic Church at that time.
149. The evidence is expected to be that notwithstanding that Ridsdale received counselling from Father Evans and Father Watson, he continued to offend. This observation was made by Professor Ball who specifically noted that the help Ridsdale received from Father Watson decreased but in no way eliminated his behaviour.
150. Professor Ball reported that 'Father Watson's treatment whilst helpful was in no way specific or specifically remedial in any sense and ... if helpful at all was only partially so'. Despite the fact that Ridsdale continued to offend while receiving counselling, no alternative treatment was sought outside the confines of the Catholic Church.

THE ROLE OF FATHER LUCAS

151. There are a number of matters relevant to this case study which involved Father Brian Lucas.
152. By October 1989 Father Lucas was a member of the Special Issues Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, and a member of the National Committee for Professional Standards. His role was to act as a source of advice and assistance to leaders within the Catholic Church in respect of providing guidance on and dealing with concerns about and complaints of child sexual abuse.
153. The operation of these committees is relevant to the Royal Commission's examination of the Church authorities' response to, among other matters, the offending by Ridsdale.
154. First, the evidence is expected to be that Father Lucas had discussions with the family of BAE after their complaint to Bishop Mulkearns in 1987 and that he met with Bishop Mulkearns about their complaint.
155. Second, Cardinal Clancy told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that he discussed a complaint from the BAL family with Father Lucas. He

said that by that time, the Church had prepared a protocol for handling such matters. Part of that protocol was for Father Lucas and Father Usher to visit the family.

156. According to a record of a 1994 meeting between Bishop Mulkearns and the Church and Catholic Church Insurances' legal advisers, Bishop Mulkearns said 'The complaint was made to the Cardinal and brought to my attention. I spoke to Brian Lucas about it. They thought it was going all right.'
157. Third, in 1988 Ms Gubasci, the president of a Yarra Bay prayer community, was told that BAO had disclosed that he had been abused by Ridsdale. She told the group's spiritual director, Father Keith Comer. In a statement, she said she was told that Fathers Lucas and Usher visited the family the next evening.
158. In this statement she also records that in early 1993, having read that Ridsdale had been charged with sexual offences on boys in Victoria, she spoke to the Dean of St Mary's Cathedral about Ridsdale's conduct in Sydney. She states she asked the Dean, Father Redden, whether there would be other media reports about Ridsdale. Father Redden replied, 'I give you my word it will never come to the Hinch program, or anything like that'.
159. She then contacted Father Lucas who she quotes as saying 'you don't have to worry about the media, Gerry's case will never come to Sydney. I am in touch with BAO family and we will take care of BAO'.
160. Fourth, Father Glynn Murphy, the Diocesan Secretary to Bishop Mulkearns, told the Catholic Church Insurances investigator that around 1993 he had spoken to Father Lucas who told him that he and Father Usher were 'dealing with' mothers of children in a prayer group who said they were interfered with by Ridsdale while he was working at the Centre.
161. Fifth, also in 1993, Father Lucas engaged solicitors on behalf of Bishop Mulkearns about 'employment issues'. Father Lucas signed the letter of engagement as 'client' for Bishop Mulkearns.

162. Finally, in October 1993, the Catholic Church Insurances investigator recommended further interviews with parish priests in the Archdiocese of Sydney about their knowledge of Ridsdale. He suggested that Father Lucas should initially contact them in order to put them at their ease and to gain their full co-operation.

RYAN

163. The Royal Commission will receive into evidence a transcript of a private hearing conducted with Paul David Ryan. Ryan is a Catholic cleric ordained in the Diocese of Ballarat. Ryan gave the following evidence.

164. Ryan joined the St Francis Xavier Seminary in Adelaide when he was about 19 or 20 years old in his second year after completing high school. Ryan told the Royal Commission that he remained there for two years until he was asked to leave. Ryan explained that he was never given a reason for being asked to leave other than they might have said he was unsuitable. He said, in hindsight, he may have been asked to leave because they knew he was gay.

165. A few years later, he entered the Corpus Christi Seminary in Werribee, Victoria. While a seminarian there, Ryan engaged in sexual activity with other seminarians. He did not know whether those running the seminary were aware of his activities.

166. Ryan said that he thought he was doing the wrong thing and that he reconciled his activities by going to confession with his regular confessor and mentor, Father Ronald Pickering. Ryan felt the need to confess because he believed the sexual act itself was a sin. After going to confession Ryan felt that his relationship with God was re-established.

167. Ryan gave evidence that when he was at Corpus Christi, the challenges and issues of dealing with celibacy were not formally addressed. He said that the implication was that celibacy was learnt by abstinence. Celibacy was put in a positive light – along the lines of ‘you give this up so that you can serve’.

168. Ryan worked as a deacon for three months at St Columba's Parish in Ballarat North prior to his ordination. While at St Columba's he was involved with a boy or young man from the choir. Ryan said he thought that the boy or young man was over 18 years old, but accepted that he could have been younger than 18. Ryan gave evidence that he probably went to confession about this. If he did confess to his parish priest, Ryan said that priest was bound not to disclose what had been confessed to him.
169. On 28 May 1976, Ryan was ordained as a priest of the Diocese of Ballarat.
170. Ryan told the Royal Commission that after his ordination he returned to Corpus Christi for some time and then lived with Father Pickering for about a year. During this time he was referred by the rector of Corpus Christi to see Ronald Conway, a psychologist used by the Catholic Church. Ryan said he thought that the reason he went to see Mr Conway was because of his sexual activity with other seminarians.
171. After seeing Mr Conway, Ryan was referred to Dr Seal. Ryan said he saw Dr Seal to correct his behaviours – his sexual 'acting out' in the seminary. Ryan understood that Dr Seal recommended he spend a year's spiritual formation in a religious community overseas.
172. Ryan gave evidence that he believed that 'spiritual formation' was religious language for dealing with the fact that he had engaged in sexual conduct notwithstanding his vow of celibacy.
173. Ryan travelled to Maryland in 1977 where he remembered seeing Dr John Kinnane, a psychologist at the Catholic University of America in Washington DC. Ryan said that he did not recall any discussion with anybody about the age group he was interested in. He thought Dr Kinnane was trying to help him understand that he was homosexual.
174. On 13 April 1978, Reverend Harvey wrote to Bishop Mulkearns and told him that Dr Kinnane was of the opinion that Ryan should return home after he had completed his therapy. Reverend Harvey said that Dr Kinnane recognised the difficulties that Ryan may have returning but that he felt it was better that Ryan 'make re-entry now'.

175. Ryan was in the United States at Star of the Sea Parish in the late 1970s. Ryan gave evidence that before the end of his time at Star of the Sea he became aware of allegations that he was involved with adolescent boys. He was asked to leave by Father Gaughan, the parish priest.
176. Ryan said he thought that by March 1980 he had told Bishop Mulkearns about 'acting out' on his attraction to adolescent boys.
177. Ryan gave evidence that in about 1991, when he was at Peshurst Parish a complaint was made against him offending against an adolescent boy. Ryan gave evidence that he accepted that the complaint was valid when called to the bishop's office by, he thought, Father Brian Finnegan and confronted about it. He left Peshurst Parish. Ryan gave evidence that he confessed these acts to his confessor and in this way he reconciled his relationship with God.
178. From Peshurst Ryan went to Ararat for a few months where, he gave evidence, he was not placed under any formal supervision.
179. After Ararat he went to the United States for treatment, he went to Rome to attend a retreat and to the St Luke's Institute in Washington for treatment. Ryan said all of this was funded by the Diocese. Ryan also travelled to London and stayed with Father Pickering where, Ryan gave evidence, he found out that Father Pickering was trying to avoid facing issues of his own sex with adolescents which were being raised with him by the Archbishop of Melbourne, Archbishop Little.
180. Ryan gave evidence that in 1992 Bishop Mulkearns arranged for him to have counselling with Father Dan Torpey. He thought the purpose of the counselling was because of his sexual behaviour with adolescents.
181. Ryan thought Bishop Mulkearns buried his head in the sand about the sexual abuse issues in the Diocese. Ryan said Bishop Mulkearns knew about him in 1977 but did not revoke his faculties until 1993.
182. The Diocese continued to financially support Ryan until about the end of 1996. In 1996, the Diocese asked him to consent to being laicised. Ryan refused.

183. On 8 September 2006, Ryan pleaded guilty to three charges of indecent assault between 1990 and 1991 against one victim. He was sentenced in the Magistrates Court of Victoria at Warrnambool to 18 months' imprisonment with a non-parole period of 12 months.

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