



**Royal Commission**  
into Institutional Responses  
to Child Sexual Abuse

3 February 2017

Mr Terence O'Brien  
Director  
Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia Ltd  
12-14 Zouch Road  
Denham Court NSW 2565

c/- Mr Milton Bray  
Milton Bray & Associates  
37 Cliff Road  
Collaroy NSW 2097

By email: REDACTED

Dear Mr O'Brien

**Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) –  
Jehovah's Witness organisation child protection policies and procedures**

We refer to our letter dated 4 November 2016 in which we sought information from the Jehovah's Witness organisation in relation to actions that have been taken in response to the public hearing on Case Study 29.

Thank you for the response you provided on 3 January 2017.

**Report of Case Study No. 29**

Following our request for information on 4 November 2016, the Royal Commission released its 'Report of Case Study No. 29: The Response of the Jehovah's Witnesses and Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia Ltd to allegations of child sexual abuse' (**Case Study 29 Report**) on 28 November 2016. A copy of the Case Study 29 Report is **enclosed** with this letter.

We note that your response of 3 January 2017 does not address the Case Study 29 Report itself. We invite you to prepare a supplementary response to our letter dated 4 November 2016 (a copy of which is **enclosed**), addressing any actions not already addressed in the response of 3 January 2017 that have been taken by the Jehovah's Witness organisation since the publication of the Case Study 29 Report.

We ask that you please provide this supplementary response, together with any supporting documents, by no later than **17 February 2017**. The Royal Commission will then issue a Notice to Produce for production of any written response and supporting documents.

### Elements of a child safe institution

As you are aware, the Royal Commission will hold a public hearing into the Jehovah's Witness organisation and Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Australia Ltd (**Watchtower Australia**) on 10 March 2017. The scope and purpose of this public hearing will include consideration of the current policies and procedures in place within the Jehovah's Witness organisation in relation to child protection and child safe standards.

In July 2016, the Royal Commission published the elements that we consider to be necessary in creating a child safe institution. A key focus of the Royal Commission is examining how institutions have implemented or propose to implement these elements.

In summary, the ten elements are:

1. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved.
4. Equity is promoted and diversity respected.
5. People working with children are suitable and supported.
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused.
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.
9. Implementation of child safe standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.

The published document titled *Creating Child Safe Institutions* is **enclosed** with this letter. It sets out the child safe elements in greater detail.

More information about the development of these elements can be found on the Royal Commission website: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/policy-and-research/our-research/published-research/key-elements-of-child-safe-organisations>

### Request for statement

In preparation for the public hearing, we ask that you, or any other appropriate representative of the Jehovah's Witness organisation, provide a written statement that sets out how your institution has addressed, or proposes to address, each of the elements of a child safe institution. Please address each element with reference to policies, procedures, guidelines or other documents of the Jehovah's Witness organisation and/or Watchtower Australia which supports the response to each of the elements.

If supporting documentation has already been provided to the Royal Commission, you are not required to reproduce this material. An index of material you have recently provided is at **Annexure A**. We would be grateful if you could use the corresponding document identifiers when referencing

documents already produced to the Royal Commission in your statement. For documents produced during Case Study 29, please refer to the exhibit numbers in addition to the corresponding document identifiers which are available from the Royal Commission's website.

The Royal Commission requests that the statement be prepared by **17 February 2017** at which time the Royal Commission will, if required, issue a summons for the statement.

Please do not hesitate to contact James Pender on 02 8282 3920 or by email at [james.pender@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](mailto:james.pender@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au) or Katie Wightman on 02 8282 3934 or by email at [katie.wightman@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](mailto:katie.wightman@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au) if you wish to discuss any aspect of this letter or the public hearing.

Yours sincerely,



Tony Giugni  
Solicitor Assisting  
Telephone: 02 8284 2499  
Email: [solicitor@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](mailto:solicitor@childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au)

**Encl:**

1. Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Case Study 29 Report*, October 2016.
2. Letter from Royal Commission to Mr Terence O'Brien dated 4 November 2016.
3. Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Creating Child Safe Institutions*, July 2016.

**Annexure A**

Date	Document Description	Document ID
1 August 2016	Letter from Watchtower Australia to All Bodies of Elders re: Protecting Minors from Abuse	WAT.0024.001.0001
May 2016	Child Protection Guidelines for Branch Office Service Desks	WAT.0024.001.0006
3 January 2017	Watchtower Australia response to Royal Commission letter dated 4 November 2016	WAT.0024.001.0016
3 January 2017	Watchtower Australia Data in response to Question 8	WAT.0024.001.0014