

# Royal Commission Case Study 28

## Ballarat Diocese

### TJHC update



Tuesday 15 December 2015 – Day 16

Day 16 of the Royal Commission's public hearing into allegations of child sex abuse by clergy and religious in Victoria's Ballarat Diocese commenced today with Fr John McKinnon continuing his evidence to the Commission.

Fr McKinnon gave evidence to the Commission about Paul David Ryan and sexual abuse complaints that had been made against him.

He also gave evidence about a consultant's meeting minute which records that Ryan would not be available for diocesan placement in 1993. He told the Commission that while the details of this decision might not have been discussed in the meeting the consultants should have asked more questions.

Fr McKinnon said that over the past year or two he has been visiting Bishop Mulkearns. He told the Commission Bishop Mulkearns' memory is worse than his and that while the Bishop has no recall of specific details of his handling of offending priests 'these things are on his mind' and that he is profoundly sorry for not having dealt with them appropriately.

Fr John Walshe, the current parish priest of Mentone Parkdale in Melbourne, gave a statement to the Commission earlier in this hearing about being with the then auxiliary bishop Pell in Mentone in 1993 when David Ridsdale called to report to Bishop Pell that he had been abused by his uncle, Gerald Ridsdale.

In the statement Fr Walshe said his recollection was that Bishop Pell was upset, that he felt worried about David and that he was concerned for David who had been 'terribly affected by the abuse'.

Fr Walshe was questioned extensively about his statement including how it was developed, its timing, how he came to provide the statement and who it was provided to. The Commission has issued a subpoena for documents related to the development of the statement.

Fr Walshe told the Commission he had met with Cardinal Pell in November last year while on holidays and that Cardinal Pell's planned appearance at the Royal Commission was 'weighing on him' and that his health had declined.

Fr Lawrence O'Toole was questioned about a visit he had made to a man in hospital. The man had been sexually assaulted as a boy by Ridsdale. Fr O'Toole was questioned heavily about why he had not reported the abuse to the police.

Fr Daniel Arundell was assistant parish priest in Mildura from 1963 to May 1968 while John Day was the parish priest. He was also in Mildura at the same time as Ridsdale was an assistant priest for two years from 1964 to 1966.

He told the Commission that he had heard nothing at the time about any offending by Day and Ridsdale.

As one of Bishop Mulkearns' consultors Fr Arundell was taken to the minutes of a number of consultor meetings in which decisions were made about the movements of Ridsdale and others. He said he had no recollection of discussions that took place at the meetings.

Mr BPD gave evidence about being abused by Paul David Ryan in 1985 as a 17 year-old. In around 1993 he decided to join the priesthood and while meeting with another priest in Ararat about his vocation Ryan walked into the room.

Within a month of seeing Ryan Mr BPD had decided not to join the priesthood and had met with Bishop Mulkearns to tell him about being abused by Ryan. Mr BPD told the Commission that Bishop Mulkearns said that he would deal with it and that there was no need to go to the police. Mr BPD never heard from Bishop Mulkearns as to how it was dealt with.

The hearing continues on Wednesday.