

INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS AND SETTINGS

Written submissions on behalf of Lloyd Evans

1. This short written submission follows the hearings in which the panel heard evidence relating to the Jehovah's Witnesses from Lloyd Evans, Sarah Davies, Duncan Corbett and Paul Gillies. The issues were extensively canvassed in witness statements and to some extent in oral evidence; we do not repeat matters already set out. We highlight three issues of particular importance following the hearings:
 - Data on abuse allegations in the Jehovah's Witnesses
 - Mr Gillies's evidence
 - The Inquiry's recommendations

Data on abuse allegations in the Jehovah's Witnesses

2. Mr Evans and the ex-JW support group repeatedly urged you to pursue full disclosure of data held by the Jehovah's Witnesses regarding abuse allegations. In the event this was not done, and Mr Evans submits that the lack of clarity during questioning demonstrates why the Inquiry must secure disclosure of all of the data or none at all.
3. Mr Evans notes that when Ms Scolding QC asked Mr Gillies about the "25 elders, 32 ministerial servants and 10 persons" reported to the branch office over the past 10 years (i.e. 67 persons in total), she inferred that these were the only individuals reported to the branch "in the past 25 years." In his written submissions, however, Mr Gillies identified that the total numbers reported were actually 57 elders (25 + 32), 50 ministerial servants (32 + 18) and 12 other persons (10 + 2) deemed "institutional" cases, with these 101 cases having been reported "during the past ten years" - not "in the

past 25 years” as characterized by Ms Scolding QC.

4. Mr Evans has already identified in his evidence that these cases represent “cherry-picked” numbers that CCJW has been allowed to produce, since child sexual abuse within the scope of this Inquiry means *all* abuse committed within the congregation, not just by elders, ministerial servants or involving abuse occurring inside a kingdom hall. Unfortunately, Ms Scolding QC’s questioning implied that the 67 cases represented the definitive number, to which Mr Gillies responded by saying “these are the statistics” before later effectively claiming that such low numbers were being discussed in the context of “130,000 Witnesses in the country.”
5. Mr Evans submits again that without pursuing a rule 9 request for disclosure of the full data, the Inquiry has unwittingly done a grave disservice to advocates and abuse survivors. Within hours of the conclusion of Mr Gillies’ oral evidence, Mr Evans notes that Jehovah’s Witness apologists on social media were already touting the 67 cases as though this proved that apostates have been lying and exaggerating all along.
6. Mr Evans is confident, based on extrapolations from the Australian Royal Commission already presented to this Inquiry, that the true number of abuse accusations exceeds 2,000 if the Inquiry were to examine all data going as far back as 1950. In that context, to characterize the numbers as only a few dozen is dangerously misleading and an insult to survivors of abuse, effectively rendering hundreds or even thousands of cases insignificant while simultaneously making his work and that of others in raising awareness considerably more onerous.
7. This investigation remains live until the inquiry publishes its report. Accordingly, Mr Evans asks again that the Inquiry reciprocates the many months of effort that he and other ex-JW core participants freely dedicated to the investigation by pursuing a full, independent audit of abuse accusations rather than effectively allowing CCJW to mark its own homework and rewrite history in the process.

Mr Gillies’s evidence

8. Mr Evans urges the Inquiry not take at face value the oral evidence submitted by Mr Gillies, which he considers manifestly misleading and therefore valueless.
9. The most crucial question facing the Inquiry's investigation into Jehovah's Witnesses has been that of whether children are separated from parents in Jehovah's Witness worship. The Inquiry has heard voluminous evidence, both in testimonies from abuse survivors and in the religion's own published materials, that children are indeed routinely separated.
10. Mr Evans notes that whenever cornered on a specific area of concern involving the safeguarding practices of Jehovah's Witnesses, Mr Gillies would effectively shrug this off as not applicable due to his extraordinary claim that children are never out of their parents' eyesight during worship. When asked directly about meetings for field service, the most obvious example of children of Jehovah's Witnesses being separated from their parents, Mr Evans notes that Mr Gillies prevaricated for 9 minutes, 37 seconds without giving any clear answers to the questions posed.
11. Most notably, when Mr Gillies was asked straightforwardly where it says in the current policy that children are not to be separated from parents in field service he obfuscated to the point where Ms Scolding QC was forced to waste yet more time showing him multiple examples of children being separated in this way in abuse cases. Finally, when Ms Scolding QC asked Mr Gillies whether it could at least be considered that wording be included in the policy to the effect that parents are not to be separated from their children for preaching Mr Gillies relented, saying: "Yes, we can have a look at that."
12. Mr Evans further notes that when Mr Gillies was asked about bible studies as a means by which children are separated from parents, as occurred in the case of PR-A5, Mr Gillies was allowed to shrug off this practice by suggesting that the word "advisable" in the relevant paragraph of the *Shepherd* book simply means that elders may veto a selection made by parents of a congregant (publisher)

who is a non-family member to study with their child.

13. Mr Evans submits that if the Inquiry had pressed Mr Gillies on this point, they would have learned that this interpretation of the wording is nowhere reflected in the published materials. Published materials grant Witness parents the opportunity to decide if their child is in need of this arrangement, perhaps because one is inactive or not a believer, but nothing is said in these materials about the parent selecting who will conduct the study. With more time to uncover the facts of the matter, Mr Evans feels that Inquiry would have heard evidence that elders approve the request of a parent for a bible study but, crucially, will almost always select an “exemplary” publisher, usually a pioneer, to conduct this study alone with the child.
14. Mr Evans is especially concerned by Mr Gillies’ claim that “never has a Witness been required to appear before their abuser in a Judicial Committee.” Mr Evans highlights that Mr Gillies is self-evidently not correct here, as the evidence heard before this Inquiry - including the Charity Commission’s investigation of the New Moston congregation - has shown.
15. In the above instances and others, Mr Evans submits that Mr Gillies has misled this Inquiry and invites you to find accordingly.

The Inquiry’s recommendations

16. Mr Evans joins other core participants represented by Slater & Gordon in urging you to recommend:
 - A new register of religious organisations and settings and those within them undertaking activities involving children
 - An expanded definition of regulated activities to capture the full range of activities involving children being carried out in religious organisations and settings
 - Mandatory reporting of knowledge and reasonable suspicion of abuse on the model advocated by Mandate Now
 - A new set of common safeguarding standards and procedures across religious organisations and settings
 - A new independent body with legal powers to audit compliance with those standards and enforce compliance

Slater & Gordon
Solicitors for Lloyd Evans