

Witness Name: John Atcherley Dew

Statement No.: 6

Dated: 4 October 2022

ROYAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO ABUSE IN CARE

SIXTH WITNESS STATEMENT OF JOHN ATCHERLEY DEW

**FILED ON BEHALF OF
THE BISHOPS AND CONGREGATIONAL LEADERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

I, Cardinal John Atrcherley Dew, will say as follow—

Introduction

1. My full name is John Atcherley Dew. I am the Archbishop of Wellington and the Metropolitan of New Zealand, serving in these roles since 2005. I was appointed Cardinal in 2015. I have previously explained my background for the Royal Commission in my statements of 23 September 2020 and 18 July 2022 so the following is an abridged version.
2. I was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Wellington (**Archdiocese**) in May 1976 and served in various parishes in New Zealand and the Cook Islands.
3. In 1988, I held a four-year term as the Formation Director for First Year Seminarians, guiding them in spiritual, human and pastoral formation. From August 1991 until June 1992, I studied at the Institute of St Anslem, Kent, England. For the rest of 1992 I did a Scripture course at St George's College, Jerusalem, and then did voluntary work in India for four months.
4. From February 1993 until April 1995, I served as the parish priest of St Anne's Parish in Newtown, Wellington. In May 1995, I was appointed the Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Wellington and served in that position until I was appointed the Archbishop of Wellington in March 2005. I was elevated to Cardinal in February 2015 and appointed Cardinal-Priest of Sant'Ippolito Church, Rome.

Previous evidence provided to the Royal Commission

5. I have previously provided the following evidence to the Royal Commission:
 - (a) A witness statement dated 23 September 2020, which focused on the Catholic Church's response to (or redress for) complainants. Specifically, I refer to paragraph [11] which describes my role as Archbishop in the context of Catholic education, and paragraphs [41] to [49] which detail the relationship and interaction between the Archdiocese and Catholic schools.
 - (b) A supplementary witness statement dated 12 February 2021 (subject to s 15 Orders).

- (c) My appearance before the Royal Commission in the Redress hearing on 26 March 2021.
- (d) A witness statement dated 18 July 2022.
- (e) A witness statement dated 19 September 2022 in response to Notice to Produce 507.
- (f) A witness statement in response to Notice to Produce 520.

General Statement

- 6. As I have stated in my statement of 23 September 2022 and 18 July 2022 and read to the Royal Commission in the Redress hearing on 26 March 2021, I remain shocked and horrified at the way people have been treated. I frequently think of how important the Royal Commission is and of the deep sense of shame that I feel regarding the abuse carried out by the Catholic Church.
- 7. I wholeheartedly stand by my statement regarding the Church's commitment to safeguarding the vulnerable and preventing harm happening in the future. I also offer my unreserved and heartfelt apologies again on behalf of the Catholic Church.

What my evidence covers

- 8. This witness statement responds to Notice to Produce No. 517 (**Notice**), issued by the Royal Commission on 31 August 2022, in relation to St Patrick's College, Silverstream (the **College**). It covers:
 - (a) my personal knowledge of the College;
 - (b) interactions between the Archdiocese and the College; and
 - (c) my personal reflections on improvements and change in response to the questions in the Notice.

Limited personal knowledge of St Patrick's College, Silverstream***Paragraphs [24] to [26] of Notice 517***

9. I have limited personal knowledge of the College as described below. While the College is located within the Archdiocese of Wellington, this is the extent of the Archdiocese's connection with the College. Unlike with some other Catholic schools in the Archdiocese, I am not the Proprietor of the College, and as Archbishop of Wellington, I have very limited interface with the College.
10. A number of questions in the Notice relate to evidence that I have given previously or that has already been given by other Catholic witnesses (or provided in other forms such as briefing papers). I therefore refer the Commission to my previous evidence set out in paragraph [5]. It is detailed and includes a history of the Church's approach to responding to abuse, including in schools.
11. I also refer to Dr Kevin Shaw's evidence, dated 18 July 2022, who provides a detailed account of the governance structure of integrated Catholic schools and the role and responsibilities of the proprietor in such schools.
12. The primary focus of this Notice is on events that occurred at the College between 1950 to the present day. Given my very limited knowledge of the College during its operation, and therefore during that time, I am unable to adequately respond to the questions asked relating to that period. However, I will say that I am deeply saddened to learn of these allegations occurred within the College.

Role of the Archdiocese of Wellington***Paragraphs [20] to [22] of Notice 517******Silverstream Board of Proprietors***

13. As part of my role as Archbishop, I am the Proprietor for a significant number of Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Wellington. However, this does not include St Patrick's College, Silverstream. I understand that the current Proprietor of the College is the Silverstream Board of Proprietors. Dr Clare Couch is the current Chairperson of that Board.

14. As I am not the proprietor of the College, I would only visit the College if I was invited, for example, for liturgical reasons.

Information sent to Archdiocese

15. I am aware that the Society of Mary routinely publishes a list of its priests' placements and changes, including any priests who are sent to the College. This list is provided to me as a matter of courtesy.
16. As discussed in briefing paper on the College, from 2002, the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference introduced a process for the review of the special character of Catholic schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. The review takes place by external audit every three to four years. I am aware that the Vicar of Education for the Archdiocese of Wellington organises the review of the special character review reports, for consistency sake. The reports are sent to the Archbishop as a matter of courtesy.
17. As discussed in the briefing paper, the Vicar for the Education for the Archdiocese of Wellington requests annual reports from all Proprietor Appointees to school boards of which I am Proprietor. Four of the Colleges in the Archdiocese are run by proprietors other than myself. Over time they have utilised the same reporting model for their own proprietor appointees but I am aware that some use differing forms, reflecting their own particular priorities. They typically send these to my office as a courtesy. This ensures that there is a broad understanding of how school are performing in terms of property and special character issues, particularly in terms of Education in Faith.

Archdiocese support

18. The Archdiocese also organises the following meetings for Catholic education within the Archdiocese:
- (a) Quarterly meeting with the Board of Proprietors from the proprietor schools (five colleges) within the Archdiocese. The meeting is to exchange information. The only decisions this group makes is to confirm the Attendance Dues rate for the Archdiocese for the next year.
 - (b) Annual meeting for principals and directors of religious studies for each of the Catholic secondary schools. Although the College is not an

Archdiocesan college, the Rector and Director of Religious Studies of the College are invited to this meeting as a matter of courtesy and collegiality.

- (c) Annual mass for all teachers at Catholic schools, including any teacher whether or not they are Catholic.
19. The Archdiocese collates information from the special character review reports of schools across the Archdiocese (whether or not the Archbishop is the proprietor) to inform strategic decisions on the Catholic aspect of special character, for example, relevant professional development for teachers.

Preventing and reporting abuse

20. The Archbishop is not responsible for preventing abuse or responding to allegations of abuse at the College. This is the responsibility of those who govern the school, being the School Board, the Board of Proprietors (and the Society of Mary where applicable).
21. The Archbishop has a pastoral responsibility for the Archdiocese, and in that respect, may offer his support to the Proprietor within the Archdiocese in the event of a report of abuse.

Personal reflections on what can be done better and changes needed

Paragraphs [23], [27] to [31] of Notice

22. Because a congregation, such as the Society of Mary, is directly under the authority of the Pope, an archbishop or diocesan bishop cannot interfere in the governance and discipline of the congregation.
23. However, a diocesan bishop does have some rights in relation to religious congregations in his diocese:
- (a) Religious present in a diocese are subject to the authority of the bishop in matters to do with public worship and the work of the Church.
 - (b) For a very grave reason a diocesan Bishop can forbid a member of a religious congregation to remain in his diocese, provided the person's major Superior has been informed and has failed to act. In these circumstances the matter must be reported to the Holy See.

24. The Archbishop is not the Proprietor of St Patrick's College, and therefore, does not have responsibility for any changes that might be needed to protect the children attending the College. These would be the responsibility of the Proprietor (in this case, the Board of Proprietors with support of Society of Mary). However, if the Archbishop were to have any significant pastoral concerns regarding issues at the College, then he would raise this with the Proprietor as a matter of collegiality.
25. At the time of writing this evidence, I am not aware of any pressing concerns or significant challenges that are required to protect those attending schools specifically like St Patrick's College, Silverstream.
26. However, I reiterate my comments in my evidence dated 18 July 2022, that I think it is critical that the Church never becomes complacent when it comes to protecting children at any schools, including St Patrick's College, Silverstream. The Church, as a whole, is committed to preventing abuse in the future and must continually improve.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and was made by me knowing that it may be used as evidence by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

Signed:

GRO-C

John Atcherley Dew

Dated:

4 October 2022