

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIMATE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA,  
ARCHBISHOP PHILIP FREIER, CONCERNING CLERGY SEXUAL ABUSE IN  
NEWCASTLE**



**Mon 25 July 2016**

The allegations on ABC TV's 7.30 report last night of clergy sexual abuse and predatory behaviour in the Anglican Church in Newcastle, going right up to a former bishop, are shocking and distressing.

As Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, I welcome the very complete examination these matters – and others to do with the diocese – will receive at the public hearing of the Royal Commission, due in a fortnight. It is important to bring such matters into the open. The Anglican Church and its officers will give their full cooperation to this inquiry.

No system can ever guarantee to keep out all predators, but the Church has worked hard to improve its protocols and practices in the past few years, and we are very open to advice from the Royal Commission.

In Victoria, the Church responded immediately to recommendations by the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into how the churches responded to abuse. One measure was incorporating the dioceses so that they could be responsible under law.

We express our solidarity with and prayers for Newcastle Bishop Greg Thompson and his officers who have worked diligently to end the culture of abuse and silence within the diocese.

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The transcript from the 7.30 report is available at,  
<http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2016/s4504361.htm>

The Royal Commission have announced a public hearing into Newcastle diocese starting 2 August. <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/2016-07/public-hearing-into-anglican-diocese-of-newcastle>