

Anglican Church of Australia

Royal Commission Working Group

Principles for the use of names of persons who perpetrated, or failed to take action in relation to, child sexual abuse¹

Introduction

The Church has followed the practice of naming organisations, buildings, commemorative plaques, trusts, bursaries, gifts, prizes, scholarships and events to honour the service of persons such as bishops, school principals, benefactors and others. In recognition of the impact of child sexual abuse on survivors and their families, their courage, and the pain they have experienced and continue to endure, the Church has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the use of names in these circumstances. In particular, the Church recognises that this use of the name of persons who perpetrated child sexual abuse or failed to take action when they were aware of child sexual abuse will cause distress to survivors and their families. Accordingly, the Church has developed these principles to govern the use of names in these circumstances.

Principles for the use of names of persons who perpetrated, or failed to take action in relation to, child sexual abuse

1. The Church should always remove the name and image of persons who perpetrated child sexual abuse from, and not use their name or image in connection with, organisations, buildings, trusts, bursaries, gifts, prizes, scholarships and events for which it has responsibility.
2. The Church should normally remove the name and image of persons who failed to take reasonable action when they were aware of child sexual abuse, and not use their name or image in connection with, organisations, buildings, trusts, bursaries, gifts, prizes, scholarships and events for which it has responsibility.
3. The Church should not remove the name or image of persons who perpetrated child sexual abuse or failed to take action when they were aware, or held suspicions, of child sexual abuse from commemorative plaques which record historical events, such as the officiation or attendance of such persons at the opening of a building. It is inappropriate to “rewrite” history by removing reference to such persons.
4. Notwithstanding the behaviour or failure of such a person, there may be a significant connection within the community to their name. Acknowledging that the removal of names can result in hurt, confusion and anxiety within the community, the Church should exercise sensitivity with, and give consideration to, family members, past-students’ associations and other groups that may be particularly connected to the name. This process should ensure that relevant information is provided to interested persons, and appropriate respect is given to those impacted by the removal of the name.

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¹ Approved by Standing Committee, November 2016 – Resolution SC2016/2/27