



IGFF
Sexual Abuse Prevention

IGFF Submission to

Board of Inquiry into historical child sexual abuse in Beaumaris Primary School and certain other government schools

Oct 2023

For more information about this submission please contact:

Clare Leaney
Chief Executive Officer
In Good Faith Foundation
Email: igff@igff.com.au
Phone: 1300 12 IGFF (4433)
223/838 Collins Street, Docklands VIC 3008

© 2023 IGFF (In Good Faith Foundation)

Collaborate, Educate & Commemorate

Summary of IGFF Services:

IGFF (In Good Faith Foundation) is a specialist support service focused on preventing sexual assault, providing support to Survivors, and advocating for change. Operating for over 25 years, our work is strengthened through collaboration, commemoration, and education.

Every recovery journey is unique. At IGFF we work collaboratively with Survivors to widen their goals and options, ensuring that the voice of the Survivor is central to every step.

These options may include, but are not limited to:

- Practical welfare and therapeutic referrals
- Professional advocacy and mediation
- Information about legal advice
- Engagement with the National Redress Scheme
- Civil litigation and criminal justice pathways
- Providing wrap-around support through the redress journey

Our services provide a wrap-around model of advocacy and case management, referring Survivors to therapeutic care and social welfare supports, fostering connections with the broader community of Survivors and advocates Australia-wide.

IGFF's community education programs and systemic advocacy amplify Survivor voices to improve responses, shape procedures and seek accountability. We acknowledge that every client is unique and work long-term with them on their journey to recovery.

IGFF is committed to working with Survivors of Institutional Abuse and tailoring unique and individualised assistance. We understand that no two journeys to justice are the same.

1. Please describe best-practice, evidence-informed approaches to providing effective support services for adults who have experienced child sexual abuse at government schools.

IGFF provides specific case management and advocacy support to adults impacted by historical sexual assault in an institutional setting. This includes religious organisations, government and private schools, non-government organisations and not-for-profit bodies, care settings, sports clubs, well-being and yoga settings, youth groups and sports clubs. Our specialist service receives some funding from the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing as well as some philanthropic funding and Commonwealth funding as a National Redress Scheme Support Service. 'Clients' rather than 'incidents' are the focus of our response informing our whole-of-life journey approach to client interaction.

IGFF service values

As part of our commitment to reflective practice and provision of service excellence, IGFF has a specific commitment to the following service values:

- Individualised: Responsive to the needs of the individual, working at their pace, to make information accessible
- Empowering: Focused on building a person's resilience, providing safety through continuity of service and self-determination through informed choice
- Collaborative: Setting short-, medium- and long-term goals together and then working towards them as a team
- Strengths-Based: Recognising everyone's whole-of-life journey, their right to own their story and regain a sense of control.

IGFF Case Managers follow a systematic process of case management and advocacy **collaborating with the client to:**

- Identify and define issues, needs and concerns
- Establish goals (short/medium/longer-term)
- Target and prioritise the resources that can be offered
- Develop and implement a collaborative support plan that involves additional stakeholders (community services, health and justice professionals)
- Follow up with relevant stakeholders and the client
- Collaborate on evaluation and feedback about these processes and case management relationship

The Case Manager works with, and collaborates around the needs of the client, ensuring that IGFF service provision is relevant, timely and responsive to the client's situation and needs, working with a network of other service providers and the client, in order to achieve agreed outcomes.

The Case Manager plays a critical role in:

- managing or leading the process with the client
- negotiating health systems and confronting inadequate service provisions and delays
- sustaining effective service provision by contributors – whether formal or informal
- adapting plans to accommodate changes in the client's situation.

Understanding and working with trauma:

Fundamental to the provision of this service is recognition of the many and multifaceted layers of abuse that a person may be subjected to. Abuse can and should be understood to comprise of one or more of the following:

- Sexual Abuse – occurs when unwanted behaviour/s of a sexual nature take place and make a person feel uncomfortable, frightened, coerced, and/or threatened. Sexual abuse constitutes a situation in which a person is forced, tricked or coerced into sexual behaviour against their will, without consenting to it or if a young person aged under 18 is subjected to it by a person charged with their care and supervision. (Ref. World Health Organization guidelines on Violence Injury Prevention Ch.2)
- Physical Abuse– Often utilised with the specific intention of punishing a victim, physical abuse is the deliberate use of physical force against a victim and may include acts such as strangulation, hitting, shaking, burning, beating and poisoning. It has a high likelihood of resulting in harm to the victim's health, survival, development, and/or dignity. (World Health Organization. (2006). *Preventing child maltreatment: A guide to taking action and generating evidence*. Geneva: WHO.
- Psychological Abuse – is best understood as the intentional causing of anguish, emotional harm, pain or distress to a victim through either verbal or non-verbal acts and may include: verbal insults, threats, intimidation, harassment and humiliation. It is typified by behaviours that encourage antisocial conduct by the victim, reject, isolate, terrorise the victim, and may include the perpetrator varying between focussing on and then ignoring their victim. (Garbarino, J., Guttman, E., & Seeley, J. W. (1986). *The psychologically battered child: Strategies for identification, assessment, and intervention*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.)
- Neglect - the refusal or failure of a caregiver to provide for the physical, emotional and developmental needs of a child or vulnerable adult under their care and supervision. It can be characterised by a single event resulting in serious physical and/or psychological harm

and serious risk to life. Neglect can also be typified by a repeat pattern of behaviours that may have the same consequences.

- Spiritual Abuse, Cultural Abuse and Ritualistic/Sacramental Abuse is the belittling the victim's spiritual or cultural worth, beliefs, or practices. It typically involves
 - Violating, corrupting or preventing the victim's spiritual or cultural practices and connection to community
 - causing the victim to transgress spiritual or cultural obligations or prohibitions and/or forcing on the victim spiritual or cultural beliefs and practices that are in conflict with their own
 - manipulating spiritual readings and practices to justify abuse and as a means of normalising or suppressing the abusive behaviours, silencing the victim, or preventing the victim from seeking support and help
- Grooming typically includes the establishment of a trusting relationship (not necessarily involving sexual activity or discussion of sexual activity) with intended victims, family members, colleagues and/or care givers and is intended to facilitate later sexual activity with an underage victim. The offence applies where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.

The impact of institutional abuse extends far beyond the primary survivor of the abuse; having lasting ramifications for immediate and extended family (including parents, sibling grandparents etc.), Whistleblowers and mandatory reporters (including teachers, medical professionals and mental health professionals), community members (parish, faith, and local). Institutional abuse should also be understood in the context of vulnerable adults (those in hospital settings, those who are impacted by diverse disabilities).

Existing commonalities are that institutional abuse occurs almost exclusively in environments where "behaviour by a person towards another person that torments, intimidates, harasses or is offensive to the other person" (UTS and UNSW Faculties of Law, 2008) is commonplace and where an adult "verbally assaults the child, creates a climate of fear, bullies and frightens the child, and makes the child believe that the world is capricious and hostile. (Karen Broadley, 2018)

An added complexity within religious institutional abuse is perhaps best explored by Mackin, Keane and Kline who define

The sexual exploitation of a child by one who has been privileged, even anointed, as a representative of God is a sinister assault on that person's psychosocial and spiritual well-being. The impact of such a violent betrayal is amplified when the perpetrator is sheltered and supported by a larger religious community (Mackin, 2009, p. 1)

Significantly though, the majority of those impacted will seek access to case management services and mental health care, often throughout the duration of their life.

Minimum Practice Standards

In 2022, IGFF provided consultation as part of the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse on the development of minimum Practice Standards. These Standards are accessible here: [Minimum Practice Standards | National Office for Child Safety](#). In summary, services should, at a minimum, be underpinned by victim and survivor centred, trauma-informed, and culturally safe values and uphold the following six standards:

- promotion of safety and self-determination
- accessible and inclusive services
- holistic and integrated responses
- experience, research, and practice informed way of working
- skilled and supported workforce
- effective organisational governance

IGFF takes the position that the Case Manager provides **leadership in conjunction with the client** and engages relevant formal and informal services to achieve the agreed outcomes.

This work is further informed by our commitment to upholding the Victorian Government's standards for human services ([Victorian State Government Department of Health and Human Services 2021](#)) which are integrated into our service practice and summarised as follows:

- **Empowerment:** People's rights are promoted and upheld
- **Access and Engagement:** People's right to access transparent, equitable and integrated services is promoted and upheld
- **Wellbeing:** People's right to wellbeing and safety is promoted and upheld
- **Participation:** People's right to choice, decision making and to actively participate as a valued member of their chosen community is promoted and upheld.
- **Governance and management:** Organisations must be effectively governed and managed at all times and meet governance and management standards consistent with internal and external standards.

The standards aim to:

- Embed and promote rights for people accessing services
- Assure the community that service providers are providing services that meet clients' needs
- Develop a common and systemic approach to quality review processes
- Build greater transparency in quality requirements between the department, service providers, clients and the community

- Foster a culture of continuous quality improvement that is embedded in everyday practice and supports the meaningful participation of people in giving feedback about the services they require and the quality of services they receive.

Reflective Practice

IGFF's reflective practice model is circular and at all points, provides the perspective of our clients to inform the work we undertake. As such, our advocacy and lobbying for systemic change is underpinned by Survivor experiences of harm through navigating justice, redress and litigation pathways, our internal practice and governance standards are informed by Survivor perspectives and lived experience, and our delivery of casework services is optimised and effective for the individual client based on our awareness of systems, responses and



Commitment to Survivors:

Survivors of institutional abuse need to:

- Be believed, cared for and assisted in their recovery by family, friends, members of communities
- Be referred for expert health care from medical and psychological trauma practitioners, welfare, and social assistance services
- Receive support to consult, make a report or statement to relevant police
- Receive counselling for trauma and stress, relationship and workplace difficulties and social impacts
- Receive expert care and support that affirms the Survivors personal, cultural and/or faith beliefs

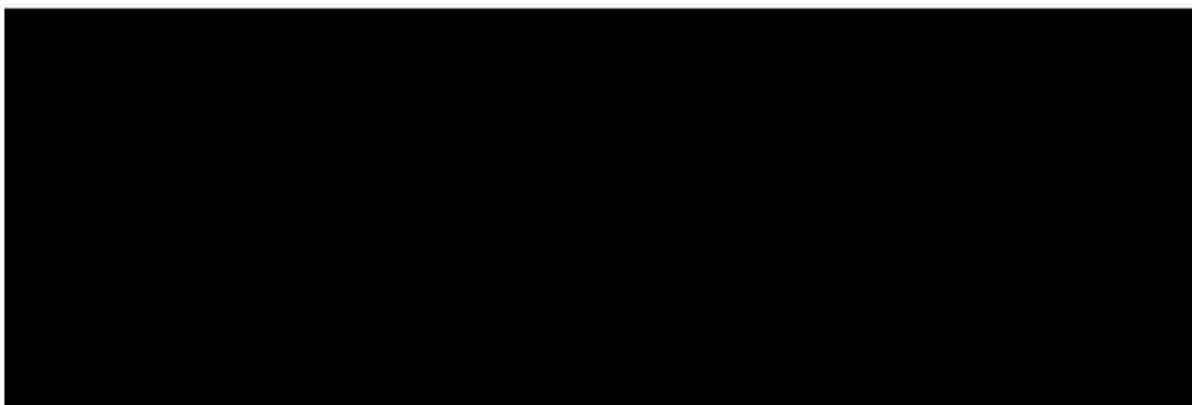
- Receive family care and counsel to assist their understanding of victim survival, ongoing trauma, and options for family renewal
- Receive expert advocacy and information about options for seeking compensation including restorative justice approaches
- Receive independent legal representation, advocacy, and support for criminal and civil justice processes
- Belong to a broader network of Survivors, supporters and professionals advocating for better care, restitution, recovery, and community recognition
- Be respected and supported in their views of religion and choices around participation
- Access education, information, and resources to ensure the safety and well-being of children, vulnerable adults, and members of communities

2. Please share any ideas to improve the effectiveness of support services for adults who have experienced child sexual abuse at government schools.

At present in Victoria, there are no specialist-funded service streams that provide holistic case management services to people impacted by institutional abuse and sexual assault. Instead, this often defaults to the mental health practitioner an impacted person may be seeing. Consequently, rather than exclusively focusing on the delivery of much needed mental, sessions are instead spent responding to other matters such as housing that are more appropriate for a case management setting. In IGFF's experience, where an individual has access to both dedicated mental health care and complimentary case management services working collaboratively together, the recovery and justice pathways are much more successful, preventing people from returning to crisis situations.

In our experience, long before a person can consider a justice or redress pathway, they first require stabilisation for various other matters, including substance and other addictive behaviours, housing and food insecurity, mental and physical health complications, family violence and insecure employment amongst others. Increasingly, and largely because of increasingly younger clients coming forward seeking our support, this has grown to include necessary mandatory reporting activities and child safety considerations. As a result, IGFF's service intake works with a person to set goals for stabilisation prior to them entering any pathway for justice or redress. In doing so, IGFF's work can maximise the capacity of the Survivor to fully engage with the justice and/or redress pathways best suited to their needs with a dual benefit of minimising the demand on crisis service providers.

The benefits of such service specialisation include a 'no-wrong-door' approach to help seeking behaviours and a collaborative network of supporting practitioners who work with a case manager and client to establish preventative strategies. In line with this IGFF maintains and supports the position that there should be a clear division between case management services and the therapeutic care delivered through counselling and psychological care providers. Whilst the two, services should work collaboratively, with the client's express authorisation, the clear division of duties and responsibilities should be maintained to maximise outcomes for the client from both providers.



3. *Please describe best-practice, evidence-informed approaches to appropriately support healing for adults who have experienced child sexual abuse at government schools, their families, friends, loved ones, other supporters, and affected communities. For example, a formal apology, memorialisation, or other activities.*

IGFF has supported several Survivors to re-engage, where appropriate and helpful, with the communities where abuse has occurred. Whether the engagement recognises an individual Survivor journey or is a whole of Institution acknowledgement, these responses must be Survivor led and involve the work of an advisory committee.

IGFF coordinated commemorative events have included:

- De La Salle College:
 - <https://igff.org.au/de-la-salle-college-memorial-to-survivors-commemoration/>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/InGoodFaithFoundation/videos/de-la-salle-college-memorial-to-survivors-commemoration/1674649832722869/>
- Xavier College:
 - <https://igff.org.au/xavier-college-memorial/>
- Emmanuel College
 - [Victim of clerical abuse applauds Emmanuel College for recognising past wrongs | The Standard | Warrnambool, VIC](#)
- St Kilda Football Club
 - <https://m.facebook.com/loudfence/posts/5771057289620095/>
- Direct Personal Responses
 - IGFF has recently consulted with DFFH on implementing best practice direct personal responses for the forthcoming State based Civil Claims Restorative Engagement Program (CC REP)

The National Day of Recognition for Survivors of Sexual and Institutional Abuse

In 2022 IGFF and LOUD Fence Inc. committed to the creation and establishment of A National Day of Recognition for those impacted by Sexual Assault and Institutional Abuse. The annual Day serves to commemorate the courage and journeys of Survivors of sexual abuse, their Supporters, and Whistle-blowers across Australia.

IGFF and LOUD Fence Inc. oversaw the creation of a National Advisory Committee (NAC) to establish the key components and scope of the Day (date, symbolisms, language and execution). The Committee comprised of Survivors, Secondary-Survivors, Whistle-blowers and Practitioner-advocates, and have representees from across the nation.

Website: <https://www.nationalsurvivorsday.org.au/>

The Day seeks to do the following:

- To annually acknowledge the profound harm caused to those impacted by Sexual and Institutional Abuse;
- To continue the important work of de-stigmatization and creating further public acceptance of the work undertaken by Survivors, Supporters and Whistle-blowers;
- To provide a clear public voice for those Impacted and the journeys they face in achieving justice; and
- To provide Governments, the Survivor Community, and the general public with an annual report measuring key social metrics and modelling outlining pertinent to Sexual and Institutional Abuse.

Below is a list of media outlets, organisations and prominent individuals that publicly supported the 2022 National Survivors Day.

Inaugural National Day 2022 National Coverage and Support

The inaugural National Day of Recognition for Survivors of Sexual Assault and Institutional Abuse took place on 15 November 2022 and was a huge success, generating enormous media coverage and political endorsement. The following outlets, individuals and institutions covered and promoted the day:

National Media:

- ABC National (print, television, radio interviews)
- ABC Radio Illawarra (interview)
- 2SM Radio Sydney (interview and bulletins)
- Channel 7 News (Tas)

- Channel 9 News (Tas)
- The Herald Sun
- The Canberra Times
- The Examiner
- The Advocate
- The Courier
- The Mercury
- Perth Now
- News.com.au
- The Daily Telegraph
- The Australian
- The West Australian
- Nina Funnell (journalist #LetHerSpeak)

Local Newspapers:

- National Tribune
- Hunter Valley News
- Namoi Valley Independent
- Mirage News
- Newcastle Herald
- Bega District
- Broome Advertiser
- Pilbara News
- Norragin Observer
- The Braidwood Times
- Glen Innes Examiner
- North Western Star
- Flipboard.com
- Ground.news

Political Endorsements and Support:

- The Premier of Tasmania released a statement endorsing the day
- The Leader of the Greens Tasmania released a statement endorsing the day
- The Tasmanian ALP released a statement endorsing the day
- Fiona Patten MP Doorstop event at the steps of Victorian Parliament

Social Media Shares and Posts (political):

- Fiona Patten MP (Vic – Reason Party)
- Senator Larissa Waters (Fed – Greens)
- Senator Katryna Billik (Fed – ALP)
- Senator Belinda Coates (Fed – Greens)
- Stuart Grimley MP (Vic – Hinch Party)
- Joel Bowden MP (NT - ALP)
- Angie Bell MP (Fed – Lib)
- Steve McGhee MP (Vic – ALP)
- Meg Webb MP (Tas - Ind)
- Mikalea Settle MP (Vic – ALP)
- Kristy Johnston MP (Tas – Ind)
- Rod Burton MP (Vic – TM)
- David O’Byrne MP (Tas – ALP)
- Eva lawler MP (NT – ALP)
- Sarah Lovell MP (SA – Lib)
- Martha Haylett (Vic -ALP State Candidate)
- Department of Health (Tas)
- Ballarat Council (Vic)
- West Tamar Council (Tas)

Social Media Shares and Posts (institutions and organisations):

- Australian Catholic University
- University of Canberra
- University of Sunshine Coast
- UNICEF
- United Nations NGO for LGBTQI Communities
- International Safe Guards for Children in Sports
- Health and Community Services Union (Australia)
- Rail Tram and Buses Union (Australia)
- Danny Frawley Centre for Wellbeing (St Kilda FC)
- Xavier College
- Wesley College
- ATSI Independent Business Council
- Drummond Street
- Rockliff Team
- Jack Davenport - NAB
- Slater and Gordon
- People with Disability Australia
- Kidspot.com.au
- Shine Lawyers
- Protective Behaviours Victoria
- Beaumaris Survivors Group
- Lifeboat
- SNAP NZ
- Bouverie Centre
- De La Salle College
- Barkley Square
- Bloom Well-being
- Greenhills Wealth Management

- Archer Magazine
- Bishop-Accountability
- Bunbury Diocese

4. Please share any reflections on the work of previous related inquiries, such as: ■ the Commonwealth Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse; and the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations.

IGFF has provided several submissions relevant to the Board of Inquiry's work, with links included below:

- https://www.pc.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/249147/sub636-mental-health.pdf
- https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/4a4bf2/contentassets/9adacdd6f0a84c23a4d8f832746a44fe/submission-documents/038.-in-good-faith-foundation_redacted.pdf
- https://www.lawreform.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Sub_18_In_Good_Faith_Foundation_final.pdf
- <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/SUBM.0046.001.0843.pdf>

