

## Press Release

# Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry to focus on child migration programme

Issued: 12<sup>th</sup> August 2014

### For immediate use

*Note: There is no embargo on the use of this press release which is designed to help give due notice to the public with regard to the Module 2 hearings. The media's assistance in providing coverage with regards to this release would be much appreciated, where this is feasible. A fuller press release regarding the Opening Hearing for Module 2 will be issued under embargo closer to the time.*

The Northern Ireland Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry will focus on a migration scheme which involved the transport of children to Australia when it recommences its public hearings at the beginning of September.

Public hearings for the Inquiry's second module of evidence will commence at **11am on Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> September at Banbridge Courthouse, Banbridge, Co Down, Northern Ireland.**

A team from the Inquiry and its confidential Acknowledgement Forum has already made two trips to Australia, during which a total of 66 applicants, now residing in Australia, were interviewed. All these individuals had applied to participate in the statutory Inquiry and/or Forum processes.

The witnesses being asked to provide evidence to the oral hearings have been chosen because they can describe the events which occurred to them before they left Northern Ireland when they were sent as child migrants to Australia. The majority of these witnesses will provide their oral evidence via video-link. The module is scheduled to last three weeks.

Documentation examined by the Inquiry has revealed that, between 1946 and 1956, children were sent from various institutions in Northern Ireland to institutions in Australia (primarily Western Australia), as part of a UK government policy of child migration.

The Inquiry hopes to commence hearings for Module 3 at the end of September. That module will examine the former De La Salle Boys' Home, Rubane House, in Kircubbin, Co. Down.

# HIA Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry

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The Inquiry commenced its public hearings in January 2014 and its first module of evidence focused on two former children's institutions in Derry/Londonderry which were run by the Sisters of Nazareth.

The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry was formally established in January 2013 by the Northern Ireland Executive. It has a remit to investigate child abuse which occurred in residential institutions in Northern Ireland over a 73-year period up to 1995.

ENDS

## Notes to Editors

1. For information, a copy of the Inquiry's public notice advertisement regarding Module 2 has been issued to media outlets in Northern Ireland and Great Britain with this press release. It should be noted that the public notice advertisement contains a Freephone number which is only available in the UK. The Inquiry's Freephone number from within the UK is 0800 068 4935. From within Australia, the Freephone number is 1 800 675920.
2. Following an inter-departmental task force report, the Northern Ireland Executive, on 29 September 2011, announced there would be an Investigation and Inquiry into historical institutional abuse.
3. On 31 May 2012, the First Minister and deputy First Minister announced the Terms of Reference for the Inquiry, and advised the Assembly of the Chair of the Inquiry and of the Panel Members for the Acknowledgement Forum.
4. An amended terms of reference to widen the scope of the Inquiry from 1922 - 1995 was announced by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on 18 October 2012. See <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-ofm-dfm-191012-ministers-widen-historical>
5. The Inquiry has a remit to investigate physical, emotional and sexual childhood abuse, and childhood neglect which occurred in residential institutions in Northern Ireland over a 73-year period up to 1995.
6. For the purposes of this Inquiry "child" means any person under 18 years of age; "institution" means any body, society or organisation with responsibility for the care, health or welfare of children in Northern Ireland, other than a school (but including a training school or borstal) which, during the relevant period, provided residential accommodation and took decisions about and made provision for the day to day care of children; "relevant period" means the period between 1922 and 1995 (both years inclusive).
7. The Inquiry is chaired by Sir Anthony Hart, assisted by Panel members Geraldine Doherty and David Lane. Acknowledgement Forum Panel members are: Beverley Clarke, Norah Gibbons, Dave Marshall QPM and Tom Shaw CBE. Biographical details are available on the Inquiry website: [www.hiainquiry.org](http://www.hiainquiry.org)
8. The Inquiry's confidential Acknowledgement Forum works alongside but separately from the statutory Inquiry process. While the statutory Inquiry is hearing evidence in public hearings, the Acknowledgement Forum is designed to provide a relaxed and informal setting in which victims and survivors of childhood institutional abuse and neglect can recount their experiences. It should be noted that the deadline for participating in both these processes is now closed.

CHAIRMAN: SIR ANTHONY HART SECRETARY: ANDREW BROWNE

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9. The Inquiry is formally established under The Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 which became law on 19 January 2013.
10. Public hearings commenced on 13 January 2014, and are currently being conducted in the former Banbridge Courthouse. Details regarding sitting weeks can be found at [www.hia inquiry.org](http://www.hia inquiry.org)
11. A total of 66 applicants resident in Australia applied to either the Statutory Inquiry or the Acknowledgement Forum or both. A team from the Inquiry visited Australia in September 2013 to take statements and met with 30 applicants. A further visit took place in May and June 2014, to meet with the remaining eligible applicants. Documentation examined by the Inquiry has revealed that, between 1946 and 1956, children were sent from institutions in Northern Ireland to institutions in Australia (primarily Western Australia), as part of a UK government policy of child migration.
12. Module 1 focused on the former St Joseph's Home, Termonbacca, and Nazareth House Children's Home, Bishops St., both in Derry/Londonderry. They were Roman Catholic voluntary children's homes which were run by the Sisters of Nazareth.