

Press Release

Inquiry's child migration hearings commence

Issued: 29th August 2014

For suggested use from 00.01 hours, Monday, 1st September (no embargo on press release)

The contents of the Chairman's Opening Remarks are strictly embargoed until 11.00 hours (BST), Monday 01st September 2014

Pool filming arrangements are in place for the Module 2 Opening Hearing. Please allow time to sign in and take your seat if you are attending. Please refer to the Editors' Notes for more details of the pool and other media arrangements.

All media requests for information should be directed to the Inquiry's Press Officer, Liz Fawcett, on 028 9020 0811 or 0771 943 5662, or at liz@lizfawcettconsulting.com

The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry will commence its second thematic module of public hearings with an Opening Hearing at **11.00 hours (GMT), 1st September 2014 at Banbridge Courthouse, Banbridge, Co. Down, Northern Ireland.**

Module 2 will focus on a migration programme which involved the transport of children from institutions in Northern Ireland to Australia.

Proceedings will begin with a short opening address from the Inquiry's Chairman, Sir Anthony Hart (attached and embargoed until Monday 01st September 2014, 11:00 hours). This will be followed by an opening address from Senior Counsel to the Inquiry, Christine Smith QC. She will provide a general overview of the structure of the module, and the issues and questions which it will be addressing.

In the afternoon, the Inquiry's assessors, Dr Margaret Humphreys CBE OAM and Dr Ann McVeigh, will give evidence. They both have particular knowledge of child migration from Northern Ireland to Australia.

Module 2 is expected to continue for 3 weeks, during which evidence will be heard from 50 individuals who are now resident in Australia and were former residents of institutions in Northern Ireland and were sent to Australia as part of a child migration programme.

A number of witnesses are scheduled to give their evidence in person. However, in most instances, their evidence will be heard via video-link. In some instances, where a witness is not giving oral evidence, their written statements will be read out in public session.

The former residents of Northern Ireland institutions who have been asked to provide oral evidence during this module have been chosen because they can describe the events which occurred to them before they left Northern Ireland to be sent as child migrants to Australia.

A total of 66 applications (including 1 duplicate application) were received from Australia in respect of those who were former residents of institutions within Northern Ireland. A team from the Inquiry and

its confidential Acknowledgement Forum visited Australia in 2013 and 2014, during which interviews were conducted.

Documentation examined by the Inquiry has revealed that approximately 140 young children from Northern Ireland who were in the care of voluntary institutions, or state bodies, were sent to Australia as child migrants between 1922 and 1995, those being the years with which this Inquiry is concerned.

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.

In total, the Inquiry is expected to hear from more than 300 witnesses during the course of the public evidence sessions.

Under the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, the Inquiry is required to complete its hearings and all investigative work by mid-summer 2015, and has to submit its report to the Northern Ireland Executive by 18th January 2016.

However, on 18th June 2014, Sir Anthony Hart, Chairman, met with Ministers in the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to seek an extension of one year to the date by which the Inquiry must submit its report. If granted, this would mean that the report would be submitted by January 2017.

Applications to participate in the Statutory Inquiry and Acknowledgement Forum are now closed. To date, 523 individuals (excluding duplicate applications) have made a formal application to speak to the Inquiry and/or its Acknowledgement Forum. Most of the applications (330) have come from individuals residing in Northern Ireland. However, there have also been 65 applications from Australia, 92 applications from Great Britain, 26 applications from the Republic of Ireland and 10 from other countries. The Inquiry's Acknowledgement Forum has now met with 416 applicants.

A total of 13 institutions in Northern Ireland are currently under investigation by the Inquiry in relation to allegations of historical institutional abuse and/or neglect. In due course, the Inquiry may decide to investigate other institutions.

The Inquiry's Chairman, Sir Anthony Hart, is a retired senior high court judge who practised in Northern Ireland. The other members of the Inquiry are Geraldine Doherty, who was formerly the Head of the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work in Scotland, and David Lane, who was formerly Director of Social Services in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, England.

The Inquiry's hearings are open to the public. Details of forthcoming proceedings will be posted regularly on the Inquiry's website: www.hiainquiry.org

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. The Opening Hearing to the public evidence sessions for Module 2 will take place commencing **at 11.00 hours GMT on Monday, 1st September 2014 in Banbridge Courthouse, Victoria St., Banbridge, Co. Down, BT32 3DH, Northern Ireland.** All media personnel attending must sign a declaration that they have read the Inquiry's Media Protocol which has been issued with this release (see note 3 below). All media personnel should be seated by **10.50 hours.**
2. A **pool arrangement** is in place with BBC Northern Ireland to enable all accredited broadcast media outlets which have provided sufficient advance notice to the BBC to have timely access to footage and audio material from the morning's proceedings at the Module 2 Opening Hearing. **No other filming or audio recording, and no photography, is permitted anywhere within Banbridge Courthouse or within its gates.**

3. The Inquiry has issued a **Media Protocol** and **three** legally-binding **Restriction Orders** of relevance to the media. **It is essential that all editors, journalists, photographers and camera crews involved in covering the Inquiry's public evidence sessions read these documents**, a copy of which is also displayed in the media room in Banbridge Courthouse.
4. The Chairman's opening remarks are being issued with this release and are embargoed until Monday 1st September 2014 at 11.00 hours. Copies of opening remarks by the Inquiry's Senior Counsel will not be released in advance.
5. In Banbridge Courthouse, each witness is accompanied by a witness support officer from their arrival until they leave. A trained counsellor provided by Contact NI is also on site and available to everyone in attendance. Arrangements have been made for witnesses from Australia, who will give evidence via video-link to be accompanied and supported in Australia by witness support staff working with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. These staff are also trained counsellors.
6. Following an inter-departmental task force report, the Northern Ireland Executive, on 29th September 2011, announced there would be an Investigation and Inquiry into historical institutional abuse.
7. On 31st 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.
8. 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 18th October 2012. See <http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/news-ofmdfm-191012-ministers-widen-historical>
9. On 12th June 2012, the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Bill and the associated Explanatory and Financial Memorandum were laid before the Assembly. The Bill passed through a number of stages and, on 11th December 2012, the 'Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Bill' was passed by the Assembly. Following Royal Assent, the Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 became law on 19th January 2013. The Inquiry is formally established under this Act.
10. 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.
11. For the purposes of this Inquiry "child" means any person under 18 years of age; "institution" means anybody, 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).
12. It should be noted that the Inquiry has been tasked with examining whether there were institutional failings in respect of historical abuse and neglect. The Inquiry has no legal power to find anyone guilty of criminal acts.
13. The Inquiry will be 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 for these individuals, Senior Counsel to the Inquiry, and other members of the Inquiry team are available on the Inquiry website: www.hiainquiry.org
14. The Inquiry will receive evidence on Monday 01 September 2014 from Dr Margaret Humphreys CBE OAM and Dr Anne McVeigh who have particular knowledge of child migration from Northern Ireland to Australia. They have been appointed under Section 4 of The Inquiry into Historical Institutional Abuse Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 which gives the chairman power to appoint one or more persons to act as assessors to assist the Inquiry panel. Assessors have knowledge in a

particular area and may be asked to assist on a one-off basis or provide support over a longer period.

15. The institutions currently under investigation by the Inquiry in relation to alleged historical institutional abuse and/or neglect are as follows (in due course, the Inquiry may decide to investigate other institutions):

Local Authority Homes

- Lissue Children's Unit, Lisburn
- Kincora Boys' Home, Belfast
- Bawnmore Children's Home, Newtownabbey

Juvenile Justice Institutions

- St Patrick's Training School, Belfast
- Lisnevin Training School, County Down
- Rathgael Training School, Bangor

Secular Voluntary Homes

- Barnardo's Sharonmore Project, Newtownabbey
- Barnardo's Macedon, Newtownabbey

Roman Catholic Voluntary Homes

- St Joseph's Home, Termonbacca, Derry/Londonderry
- Nazareth House Children's Home, Bishop St., Derry/Londonderry
- Nazareth House Children's Home, Belfast
- Nazareth Lodge Children's Home, Belfast
- De La Salle Boys' Home, Rubane House, Kircubbin

16. Further background information on the Inquiry is contained in a background briefing paper which is being issued to the media and which is available from the Inquiry's Press Officer. Further information is also available on the Inquiry's website. The Inquiry is also providing a briefing note on the Inquiry's practical arrangements which is being issued to the media and which is available from the Press Officer.

17. **All media requests for information should be directed to the Inquiry's Press Officer, Liz Fawcett, on 028 9020 0811 or 0771 943 5662, or at liz@lizfawcettconsulting.com**