

**THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE
HANDLING OF CHILD ABUSE BY RELIGIOUS
AND OTHER NON GOVERNMENT
ORGANISATIONS**

**SUBMISSION IN REPLY TO TRANSCRIPT OF
EVIDENCE OF CHRIS WILDING
BY PETER O'CALLAGHAN QC
INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONER**

INTRODUCTION:

1. On 26 March 2013 Ms Chris Wilding gave evidence to the Committee. I find it necessary to reply to parts of that evidence, first to refute and correct the scurrilous accusations Ms Wilding makes of me and secondly to emphasise that Ms Wilding falsely represented herself to be speaking on behalf of Broken Rites. Ms Wilding has not been associated with Broken Rites since 1996. I now set out extracts of her evidence in italics and provide my comments thereon.
2. *“That is precisely the job description of Melbourne’s Mr Fix It, Peter O’Callaghan, QC – to snuff out the scandal, pay out the victims, shut them up, deter them from reporting to police, and, at the same time, gather information for the Church. O’Callaghan was employed by the Archdiocese of Melbourne as part of the Melbourne Response set up by Pell as a purportedly patently Independent Commissioner and a vehicle for victim compensation. In reality, O’Callaghan was an employee of the Melbourne Archdiocese and was effectively wearing two hats, and possibly three: firstly, taking evidence from the victims to determine compensation; secondly, hearing evidence or confession from the alleged offender, if still alive; and thirdly passing on information to the Church about offenders who, in his legal experience, would certainly face a jail term. This would then enable the Church to move the priest to another country to avoid prosecution. This set up was seriously flawed from the start, consistent with the Church’s primary objective to control and contain the criminal information about their predatory clerics”.*

COMMENT:

I reject these statements root and branch. I refer to and rely upon the description of my role in Submissions and Evidence which I refer to without repeating to reject Ms Wilding’s allegations which are revealed for what they are, false and malicious.

3. *“Mrs Coote – Chris, thank you very much indeed. You have given a very thorough overview of what a lot of your Broken Rites people have said to us during these hearings...” (page 7) (Emphasis supplied)*

COMMENT:

For reasons which appear hereunder Ms Wilding is not one of Broken Rites people.

4. *"Mrs Coote – And do you believe that the people you represent in Broken Rites would understand the dilemma of the interface between the Catholic Church and a functioning democracy here in Victoria?" (page 9) (Emphasis supplied)*

COMMENT:

Ms Wilding does not speak for or represent Broken Rites. She should have informed the Committee of this but took no steps to correct the perception which Mrs Coote appears to have that she did speak for or represent Broken Rites.

5. *"Mr O'Brien – Chris, it may help us, because we have only a very short one page from you, to put your submission in context if at some stage you could provide us with some formal background as to your involvement with Broken Rites as a founder, maybe briefly now at the end of my question or subsequently". (Emphasis supplied)*

COMMENT:

Ms Wilding was guilty of deception in that she made no effort to describe her relationship with Broken Rites. She was content to leave Mr O'Brien with the impression he apparently had that she was still involved with Broken Rites.

6. On the 3rd April 2013 Chris McIsaac on behalf of the Broken Rites Executive Committee wrote me as follows:
"Following our telephone conversation on 26 March 2013, I wish to reiterate that the Submission made about you, presented by Chris Wilding at the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry on Monday 25 March 2013 was not in any way authorised by Broken Rites. Subsequently the Media reporting that gave the impression was the view point of Broken Rites was falsely reported. Broken Rites authorises only Executive Members nominated by the Executive Committee to speak on behalf of Broken Rites including Broken Rites (Australia) Collective Inc. We have taken action to remedy this situation in order to prevent to the best of our ability this type of deception in the future".

7. In my conversation with Chris Mclsaac on 26 March 2013 she advised that Chris Wilding and Broken Rites broke up in 1996.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter J. O'Callaghan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

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Peter J O'Callaghan QC

31st July 2013