



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Royal Commission into Institutional
Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**

SPEECH

Tuesday, 1 March 2016

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Speaker Marles, Richard, MP	Question No.

Mr MARLES (Corio) (13:39): The evidence that Cardinal Pell has been giving to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has stirred the emotions of hundreds of thousands of Australians across the country. One of those, Leonie Sheedy—who along with Joanna Penglase was the founder of the Care Leavers Australia Network—has been attending those hearings. I spoke to her this morning.

I am a patron of CLAN. I can see at least one other patron of CLAN here as well, and I think others are coming this afternoon. I think for all of us we feel that what little we add to their advocacy is important work—as important as any that we do in this place. CLAN has been a driving force behind the apology to the forgotten Australians and the establishment of the royal commission itself, because part of the story of those who grew up in orphanages in Australia was child sexual abuse.

A week or so ago Leonie introduced me to two women in their 60s who were visiting Geelong for the first time. They had grown up at St Catherine's with Leonie but had lived their lives in Melbourne ever since. They literally had not made that journey down the road once since then. Coming down the road was a traumatic experience for them. They were dry retching and they were in tears. To be honest, they did not want to come back to Geelong again. It says so much about how the impact of their childhoods is with them more than half a century later.

The royal commission has recommended the establishment of a single nationally organised redress scheme. As a member of the Labor Party, I am proud that we have committed to that and we call on the government to do the same.