

Third public statement published on 1st July 2014

YMCA Australia Statement re Royal Commission Findings re Case Study Number 2

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has published its findings into Case Study 2, which examined the responses of YMCA NSW and NSW Police into the Jonathon Lord case.

Between 2009 and 2011 Jonathon Lord abused children under the care of a YMCA. He was then convicted of child sexual abuse of 12 children, eight of whom were under YMCA's direct care.

We are sorry to the children who were abused, and to their families. The YMCA condemns child sexual abuse and recognises it can have devastating long-term impacts.

In relation to this case, YMCA NSW has acknowledged its systems and processes failed in the manner identified by the Royal Commission.

As a Movement dedicated to providing opportunity for children, young people and families to reach their potential, and in supporting the rights of children and young people, this is a devastating reality for all of us.

We also acknowledge that there are others who have been affected as well, including the staff and volunteers at YMCA NSW.

YMCA NSW has done, and continues to do, a significant amount of work in response to the Royal Commission. [You can find a link to their public statement here.](#)

In Australia, the YMCA has been providing services to children and young people for over 160 years. We have a community responsibility and duty of care to protect them from harm at all times, and we take this very seriously.

YMCA Australia has not been not standing still regarding child protection, with the Royal Commission serving to sharpen our focus.

- We've continued to proactively review our child protection policies, processes, resources, culture and governance and will launch a new national child protection policy later this year.
- This new Child Protection Policy raises the standards even higher for all YMCAs and ensures compliance to ensure all children are protected.
- We continue to work closely with YMCA of NSW to address the issues identified by the Royal Commission in Case Study Number Two and to ensure what we are learning is shared with other independent YMCAs.
- Every YMCA has either been audited or is scheduled for an external audit, by the Australian Childhood Foundation.
- We're stepping up the training of our staff and volunteers and raising their awareness of the issue – and plan to invest a further \$1.1 million over the next three years to externally audit all YMCAs to ensure they are maintaining the highest of standards in child protection.

- We now ask anyone who may have been affected in the past to contact police, the Commission, or the YMCA – whoever they feel most comfortable contacting.
- We're committed to sharing our learnings from the Royal Commission across the Australian and International YMCA movement – and the children's services sector in Australia.
- We will report back to the Australian public on our continued progress and what the YMCA has learned and changed since we first became aware that children had been abused in the YMCA, at our National Convention in Darwin in November.

At a local level YMCAs are focused on addressing these actions and many have invested substantial resources into improving and implementing policies and procedures which are monitored for compliance.

This is what is needed within the YMCA Movement and YMCA Australia will be ensuring that all YMCAs fully support our vital role as guardians of the children and young people under our care.

Graham Kent, President, YMCA Australia