



**‘They Did Not Believe Me’:**

**Adult Survivors’  
Perspectives of  
Child Sexual Abuse by  
Personnel in  
Christian Institutions**

Dr Jodi Death

Crime and Justice Research Centre  
Queensland University of Technology

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## ‘They Did Not Believe Me’: Adult Survivors’ Perspectives of Child Sexual Abuse by Personnel in Christian Institutions

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### **Executive Summary**

Child sexual abuse (CSA) in Christian Institutions continues to be of serious concern in public, criminal justice and institutional discourse. This study was conducted in conjunction with Project Kidsafe Foundation and sought the perspectives of Australian survivors of CSA by Personnel in Christian Institutions (PICIs). In total, 81 individual survivors responded to an online survey which asked them a range of questions about their current and childhood life circumstance; the nature, extent and location of abuse; grooming strategies utilised by perpetrators; their experiences of disclosure; and outcomes of official reporting to both criminal justice agencies and also official processes Christian institutions. Survey participants were given the option to further participate in a qualitative interview with the principal researcher. These interviews are not considered within this report. In summary, survey data examined here indicate that:

- Instances of abuse included a range of offences from touching outside of clothing to serious penetrative offences.
- The onset of abuse occurred at a young age: between 6 and 10 years for most female participants, and 11 and 13 years for male participants.
- In the majority of cases the abuse ceased because of actions by survivors, not by adults within families or the Christian institution.
- Participants waited significant time before disclosing their abuse, with many waiting 20 years or more.
- Where survivors disclosed to family members or PICIs, they were often met with disbelief and unhelpful responses aimed at minimising the harm.
- Where an official report was made, it was most often made to police. In these cases 53% resulted in an official investigations.
- The primary reasons for reporting were to protect others from the perpetrator and make the Christian institution accountable to an external agency.
- Where reports to Christian institutions were made, most survivors were dissatisfied with outcomes, and a smaller majority was extremely dissatisfied.

This report reflects the long-held understanding that responding to CSA is a complex and difficult task. If effective and meaningful responses are not made, however, trauma to the survivor is most often compounded and recovery delayed. This report demonstrates the need for further independent analysis and oversight of responses made to CSA by both criminal justice, religious and social institutions. Meaningful change will only be accessible, however, if family, community and institutional environments are safe places for survivors to disclose their experiences of abuse and begin to seek ways of healing. There is much to be learnt from survivors that have already made this journey.

## **Introduction**

### *Project scope and aims*

This project aims to contribute to the growing knowledge of child sexual abuse (CSA) by Personnel in Christian Institutions (PICIs) in Australia. This report draws on data developed through a research project that targeted survivors of CSA by PICIs in Australia. The intent of the project was as follows:

- To address gaps in knowledge about the experiences of child abuse within Christian Institutions.
- To systematically capture and measure survivors' perspectives and voices.
- To generate further understanding and contribute to the literature regarding CSA by PICIs, specifically in the Australian context.
- To provide data to inform policy development and survivors' calls for official government inquiries.

There are increasing amounts of international data that should be considered in order to provide context for this report. Focused on the perspectives and experiences of survivors, this study is somewhat unusual in that it does not draw on documents of complaints from Christian institutions but has instead sought out the voices of survivors. This research is important because it highlights that it is not only the occurrence of CSA that has long-term impacts on the lives of survivors, but also the responses made to official reporting of CSA. This innovative study involved the first survey of Australian survivors which is completely independent of Christian Institutions.

### *Literature review*

The recognition of CSA as a social and criminological issue was a process fraught with the challenges of identifying and responding to a phenomenon that is inherently secretive. Research into child sex offenders rose in the 1980s and 1990s. The rise in victimology research on victims of CSA and the means of responding to sexual violence against both adult women and children also increased significantly during these decades. Several inquiries in both the United States of America (USA) and UK recognised the significant impact on families and communities when official responses to allegations of child sexual abuse were not managed well and investigations were wholly reactive. Across the Western world at this time, child protection responses to CSA were being given further attention and state authorities were taking a more rigorous interest in governing the lives of children who were subject to all forms of abuse in the home.

### *Perpetrators of child sexual abuse*

From the late 1970s through to the 1990s, research into child sex offenders, to become more commonly known by the clinical diagnosis of paedophiles, established that perpetrators were overwhelmingly male, and came from varied social backgrounds, classes and occupations (Craissati et al., 2002; Davidson, 2008; Dixon et al., 2007). Education levels of perpetrators were acknowledged to vary also, debunking the myth that CSA was a crime of dysfunctional, lower-class, uneducated individuals. Perpetrators were recognised to often have significant offending careers, with detection often not occurring until their late 20s to mid-30s, and to engage in a range of 'grooming' strategies in order to gain compliance from targeted children (Davidson, 2008; Warner, 2009). Further research recognised that the onset of offending in some cases began in adolescence and continued through adulthood with some perpetrators targeting victims of a particular age and/or gender and some perpetrating offences in opportunistic ways, without a focus on age and/or gender in victim selection (Bourke et al., 2012; Hanson and Morton-Bourgon, 2005).

From research with detected offenders and case studies, growing psychological and criminological literature developed perpetrator typologies. This work recognised diversity within the offending patterns, strategies and goals of child sex offenders (Carlstedt et al., 2009; Robertiello and Terry, 2007). At the most basic level, typologies of child sex offenders were categorised as 'fixated' and 'regressed'. These became the categories most widely applied in offender assessment and treatment (Simon et al., 1992). Fixated offenders were marked by exclusively having relationships with children, often involving early onset of offending in adolescence, and being at the most risk of reoffending. Alternatively, regressed offenders often offend as a response to stress, have adult onset of behaviours and, with intervention, are less likely to reoffend. With the development of typologies of offenders, risk assessment for reoffending became increasingly nuanced (Beech et al., 2003; Vess and Skelton, 2010).

Feminist theory on child sex offending widely critiqued the socio-political context in which perpetrations of child sexual offences were enabled (Fischer, 2003; Purvis and Ward, 2005; Scott, 2001). In a broader context of gendered sexualised violence, and recognising that the majority of offenders were male and the majority of victims were female, feminisms widely critiqued patriarchal social structures and attitudes that enabled, denied and tolerated offending (Smart, 1989). Over the four decades that feminisms have been researching CSA and initiating responsive policy, understandings of why and how perpetrators offend and the most appropriate interventions for offenders, communities and families have become increasingly nuanced and complex (Lancaster and Lumb, 1999). What remains at the centre of feminist analysis, however, is an understanding that CSA is an act of power rather than just being about sexual gratification. This provides the standpoint from which feminist researchers and practitioners address the perpetration and strategies of offenders, as well as their management within criminal justice and social systems (Smart, 1989; Petrie, 2012; Warner, 2009).

#### *Victims of child sexual abuse*

Given that access to survivors of CSA is often more readily available than to perpetrators, much research has been conducted on victims of CSA. It is still widely acknowledged that the actual rate of CSA remains unknown given that there is still evidence of under-reporting and the crime itself is secretive by nature (Warner, 2009; Woodiwiss, 2009). Second wave feminisms challenged traditional criminology to include a focus on victims of crime and it is in this tradition that much of the work on gendered violence, including CSA, has emerged (Featherstone and Fawcett, 1994; Schneider, 1997). Feminisms have long recognised that significant barriers exist in the ability of survivors to disclose their abuse, including social expectations that women are the gatekeepers of sex and consequently responsible for sexual violence prevention (Carmody, 2005; McElvaney et al., 2012). Outside of the general challenges of rape, myths that are persistent in communities, the reactions of mainstream criminal justice systems have often resulted in the retraumatising of survivors (Lonsway and Archambault, 2012; McGee et al., 2011). With high attrition rates across jurisdictions, the challenge of official reporting remains significant for survivors (Daly, 2005; Maguire, 2009; Parkinson et al., 2002). Research suggests that, despite a 'tough on crime' rhetoric that pervades western jurisdictions' responsiveness to violence, a number of factors continue to impact negatively throughout the life of a case. This includes difficulties with the ability to form a case, juridical decision making and sentencing outcomes (MacMartin, 2005; Walsh et al., 2008; Wood and MacMartin, 2007). These include the perceived difficulties of children's evidence, perceived motivations for sexual offending, the historical nature of many complaints of CSA, and the adversarial nature of criminal justice systems.

The long- and short-term impacts of CSA on a range significant life issues have been extensively studied. Areas of concern include employment and education (Lee et al., 2006); the capacity to establish and maintain healthy relationships as adults (Chan, 2011); mental health outcomes (McPherson et al., 2012); substance abuse (Maniglio, 2011); engagement with criminal justice

systems (Simpson et al., 2008); further sexual victimisation as an adult (Reid and Sullivan, 2009); difficulties with identity formation (Reavey and Gough, 2000); and the long-term management of trauma related responses (Whitelock et al., 2013). Barriers to life outcomes can commence early for victims of CSA and have sustained effects throughout adult life; for example, interruption to study often occurs at a young age. Children who are experiencing abuse at times displaying a range of disruptive behaviours that impact on their ability to engage in education; this includes difficulty in concentrating in classrooms, increased likelihood of engaging in substance abuse, and a range of emotional difficulties (Maniglio, 2011; Olafson, 2011). Further studies report that long-term employment and mental health outcomes for survivors of childhood abuse are often problematic (Spataro et al., 2004; Kendall-Thackett et al., 1993). Lasting impacts include long-term health disorders, heightened anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem and difficulties in interpersonal relationships (Anam et al., 2006; Chan, 2011; Mullen et al., 1996). There is increasing recognition that negative life outcomes are not universally experienced by survivors of CSA. However, where they are experienced, survivors often have difficulty accessing meaningful service provision and symptoms of abuse are often medicalised in mainstream services (Bunting, 2008; Jonzon and Lindblad, 2004; Warner, 2009). This is despite some achievements made within legal and welfare systems to effectively address the needs of survivors of CSA (Cook, 2012; Warner, 2009). Although often still limited in their service provision capacity, the advent of Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) and cross-disciplinary Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART) continues to show promise in providing more meaningful service provision for survivors of sexual violence (Cole, 2011; Fehler-Cabral et al., 2011; McLaren et al., 2009).

#### *Child sexual abuse within Christian institution in the public eye*

Child sexual abuse within Christian institutions has attracted the attention of academics, journalists and professionals. A growing body of work focuses on CSA by Catholic priests pointing to the hierarchical structures of the Catholic Church as significant in the abuse of power, including in the management of CSA by leaders of Christian Institutions (Gorrell, 2006; Fawley-O'Dea, 2004; Keenan, 2012). Much of the investigative work of this nature has been researched and written by American journalists and includes extensive narratives of victim/survivors (The Investigative Staff of the Boston Globe, 2002; Bruni and Burkett, 2002; Berry and Renner, 2004). In the Australian context, there is little such work. At least two key sources, (Porter, 2003; Parkinson, 2003) were researched and written by individuals who have an affiliation, or who have worked in close consultation, with particular denominations. These sources still manage to be critical of institutional responses to CSA and Porter (2003) in particular provides a thorough critique of the exercise of power in Anglican and Catholic institutions of Australia. In addition to these sources, a number of reports are specifically relevant to the Australian context. These include the Australian Senate Enquiry into Forgotten Australians (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004; Commonwealth of Australia, 2005a; Commonwealth of Australia, 2005b); Morrison's (Morrison, 2005) report on the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide; Olsson & Chung's (Olsson and Chung, 2004) report on the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide; and O'Callaghan & Briggs' (O'Callahan and Briggs, 2003) report on the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane; and, Parkinson, Oates and Jayokody's (2009) *Study of Reported Child Sexual Abuse in the Anglican Church*. These works document and explore a number of important issues including victim/survivors stories, structural issues of power and CSA within specific denominations, specific instances of CSA within Christian institutions, and specific responses to these instances. This current research project expands on this knowledge by drawing on new original research based on surveys with 81 child abuse survivors.

Internationally, enquiries into Christian institutional management of CSA have focused mostly on the Catholic Church. In Ireland the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, now known as the Ryan Report (May 2009) examined a broad spectrum of child abuse, including CSA, perpetrated against children 'placed by the State in residential institutions run by religious

orders...' (Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, 2009). The Commission of Investigation into Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin, now known as The Murphy Report (Department of Justice and Equality, 2009) led into a further Commission of Inquiry in the diocese of Cloyne, now known as the Cloyne report (Department of Justice and Equality, 2010). All of these inquiries revealed mismanagement of reports of CSA to Catholic authorities and the mismanagement of perpetrators of abuse, mostly since 1950. Other notable enquiries in Europe have been conducted throughout England, Scotland, Poland, Germany and Belgium (Keenan, 2012; Balboni, 2011).

Perhaps the most well cited studies on the issue of CSA by Catholic clergy are the John Jay studies (2004, 2011). The first John Jay study was commissioned by the USA Conference of Catholic Bishops and relied on surveys mailed to each Catholic diocese across 50 states of the USA (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004). This study asked each 'diocese, eparchy or religious community' to complete three survey tools which addressed the three key areas of allegations made within their institution, a survey for each priest that had been accused of CSA and a survey for 'each alleged instance(s) of abuse connected with each priest' (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004). These surveys provided a range of data that represents a comprehensive study of CSA reported to and recorded by Catholic dioceses. This study addresses four key areas; the prevalence of CSA by Catholic priests and deacons; the demographics of priests and deacons accused of CSA; the nature of incidents and allegations; and the responses of dioceses and religious communities to allegations of abuse. The intent of this study was to consider the nature and scope of CSA by Catholic Clergy from 1950-2002. As the researchers for this study had only one year to complete the project, analysis of the data is limited in the report and further publications were relied on to expand on findings (Terry, 2008; Terry and Ackerman, 2008; Terry et al., 2011). The findings will be referenced where relevant to this study.

The second John Jay Study (Terry et al. 2011) considers the causes and contexts of CSA by Catholic clergy. This study was more comprehensive than the first and the report, not suffering from the same time restraints, is more detailed. The study also extends its period of consideration from 2002-2010 and includes consideration of other institutions such as the Boy Scouts of America, Big Brothers Big Sisters and a range of other settings such as child care, athletics organisations and schools (Terry et al. 2011). The study also considers a number of other denominations and extends to reflect on abuse in the Jewish community, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and the Jehovah's Witnesses. This study was widely reported in media across the world for conclusions which contextualise CSA by priests in the 1970s with rising 'deviance' in the form of divorce, homosexuality and sexual liberation (Moses, 2011). Specific results in terms of victim and perpetrator demographics, strategies, outcomes, and elaboration by Terry et al. (2011) will be discussed where appropriate in this current report.

In Australia, the *Forgotten Australians* Senate Inquiry (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004) and the *Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland institutions* (Queensland Government, 1999), widely known as the Forde Inquiry. were not specifically commissioned to examine child abuse within Christian institutions. Rather, as Christian institutions frequently managed the facilities where children were placed in out-of-home care (OOHC), they were well represented in these enquiries. The *Forgotten Australians* Senate Inquiry (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004) and the Forde Enquiry (Queensland Government 1999) both demonstrate the variety of denominations within which CSA has been perpetrated historically. The *Forgotten Australians* Senate Inquiry (Commonwealth of Australia 2004) made significant criticisms of Salvation Army services, which somewhat ironically has traditionally identified with a social justice agenda. The incidence of child abuse in its institutions is indicative of the insidious and calculating nature of child exploitation. As stated in one submission to the Senate inquiry (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004):

What annoys me the most is the two faced presentation of Salvation Army officers who pride themselves as upstanding citizens in the community while in SA uniform, the other face of abuse hidden from the community...

These inquiries have not only given voice to victim/survivors who have experienced years of suffering from childhood abuse in religious institutions but have also highlighted the challenges entailed in the appropriate handling of sexual abuse allegations both current and historical.

Popular media frequently represent Christian institutions as responding to revelations of sexual abuse by leaders with denial, cover up, confusion, naivety, pay outs for silence and victim blaming ((Keenan, 2012; McGrath-Merkle, 2009). Confronted with what has generally been termed a crisis, or crises, Christian institutions have been forced to reassess their involvement with and acceptance of child protection measures and legislation (Hogan, 2011; Doyle, 2003). Although the more traditional denominations have typically been favoured targets for accusations of mishandling CSA, it is evident that CSA within Christian institutions traverse denominations (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005a; Lupu and Tuttle, 2004; Queensland Government, 1999).

### **Methodology**

This project was initiated by Survivors Australia, (henceforth referred to as Project Kidsafe Foundation)<sup>1</sup> which, seeking to further understand the experiences of survivors of CSA by PICIs, designed the survey to collect relevant empirical data. Such empirical research may be used to promote effective, evidence based practices to decrease sexual abuse and to advocate for institutional responses that are more in line with contemporary cultural values which deplore CSA and most Christian Institution's own articulated commitments to human development and justice. There were two phases to the project and two methods of data collection: an initial online quantitative survey and the option to participate in a qualitative interview. The decision to engage in a mixed method was not difficult to make. Although there is significant recognition that surveys of victims of crime provide strong empirical data, such surveys are also limited in their capacity to provide rich data. The use of interview as a power sharing technique has been recognised by feminist victimologists as essential in creating a diverse and complex picture of the lived realities of victimisation (Anandhi and Velayudhan; Walklate, 2012; Keary, 2012). A decision to rely solely on survey material was thought to leave out the detail that is imperative to representations of victims.

The survey was piloted with known survivors in August/September of 2011, launched in September 2011, and concluded in February 2012. The survey tool compelled participants to answer three screening questions in order to access the tool. After this, because many questions were very direct and potentially confronting, answering each further question was nominal.

Participants were recruited in a number of ways. Initially the project was advertised through Project Kidsafe Foundation on their website, Facebook page and through their database of survivors. A number of other survivor support groups were also approached to promote the project amongst their members. This included Bravehearts, Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA), CLAN, Broken Rites and the North Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault. Not all survivors' support organisations agreed to advertise the project amongst their members and those that requested a fee to do so were not utilised. A media release regarding the launch of the survey tool generated significant interest from a number of media outlets across the country. Finally, several survivors emailed the principle researcher with contacts that they thought may

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<sup>1</sup> Survivors Australia underwent a rebranding to Project Kidsafe Foundation during the research process.



be helpful in promoting the project, primarily solicitors who represented survivors, and these individuals were also contacted by email.

Ethics approval for both stages of the project, survey and follow-up interview, was obtained from The University of Queensland Ethics in Human Research Committee (approval number 1100000487). Participants who completed the survey could self-nominate to be contacted about undertaking an interview with the principal researcher. Briefly, the principal researcher conducted 15 interviews in total, both face to face and over the phone. The rich qualitative data gathered in these interviews will be discussed in a separate report. The qualitative comments discussed in this current report were offered by participants where the survey tool allowed for further comments to be made in written format. In this report all participant quotes taken from the survey are amended only for obvious spelling and typographical errors.

*Terminology*

The term 'Christian institution' is used in order to capture the diversity of denominational services provided by institutions that may traditionally be understood as 'churches'. The term church was used naturally by participants but is thought to be too broad for general discussion of CSA within Christian institutions. In this study the term church is used when it is consistent with survivor use in the survey tool or when referring to a specific denomination or a specific activity that does occur within a church building or church service.

'Personnel in Christian institutions' (PICIs) is used because the term Clergy is thought to be too narrow to reflect the institutional roles of perpetrators. The term PICIs includes those individuals with an area of influence that is recognised by Christian institutions: this may be within paid or voluntary positions, and in formal or informal spheres of influence. This represents an improvement on extant research that has largely focussed solely on ordained clergy.

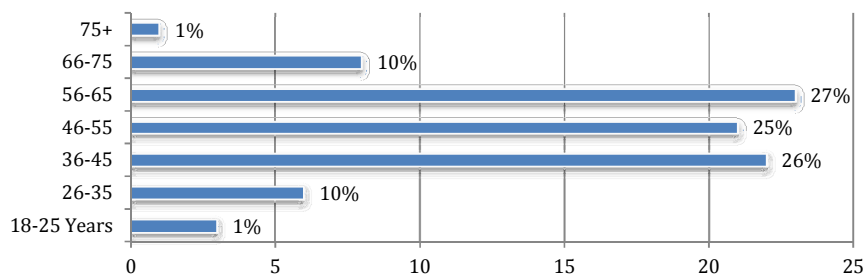
Research project findings are now presented, commencing with an analysis of socio-demographic characteristics.

**Socio-demographic characteristics**

Participants were asked a number of standard demographic questions about their status at the time the survey was taken. This information was used to provide insight into life outcomes for participants and for comparison with other research such as Parkinson et al. (2012) and Terry (2008). The following summarises such data.

*Age*

The majority of participants (78%) identified as being aged between 36 and 65 at the time that the survey was taken (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Age at time of survey (n=84)**

*Sex*

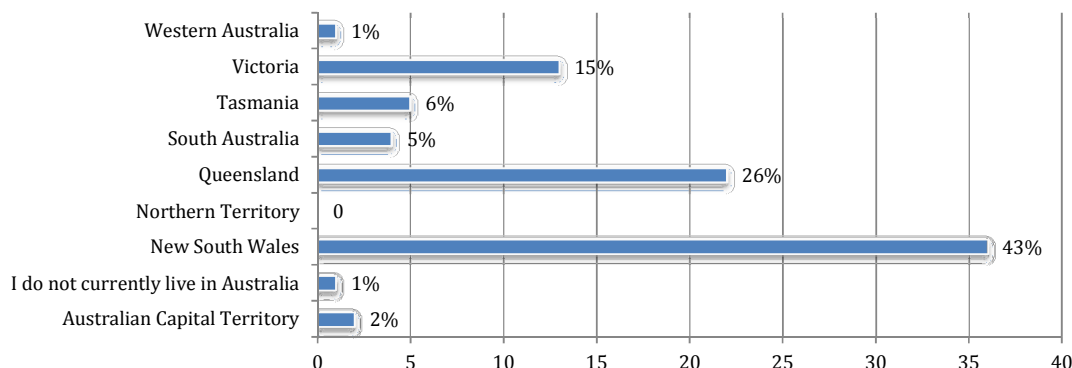
Participants' sex was almost evenly spread with 49% (41) male and 51% (43) female (n=84). In comparison, the John Jay (2004) study into sexual abuse in the Catholic Church of the USA noted that 81% of victims recorded nationally were male and 19% female. The gender bias towards male victims in the USA results may have been influenced by recognised limitations in the data source. The first John Jay (2004) study relied on responses provided in surveys sent to 195 diocese and eparchies of the USA. The study relied on the incidence of abuse firstly being reported to diocese officials, secondly being recorded by those officials, then remaining on record until the time of the study and, finally, being accurately recorded in the survey by diocese officials. By directly seeking out survivors of CSA by PICIs, this study avoids some of the limitations associated with gathering data from official institutional sources. It is recognised, however, that these are important documents and that the John Jay studies have done much to illuminate the ways in which the Catholic Church of the USA has mismanaged CSA perpetrated by its clergy.

*Place of birth and ethnicity*

Participants (n=84) primarily identified as Australian born (86%, 72), with other participants identifying as born in New Zealand (5%, 4), England (1%, 1), Ireland (2%, 2) and Scotland (1%, 1). The other category (5%, 4) was comprised of individuals born in Vietnam (1) and Italy (3). Given this, it is not surprising that 93% (78) of participants reported that English was the main language spoken in their childhood home. Only 8% (7) of participants identified as Aboriginal, with no participants identifying as Torres Strait Islander. Participants were not asked to identify by other ethnic groups.

*State of residence*

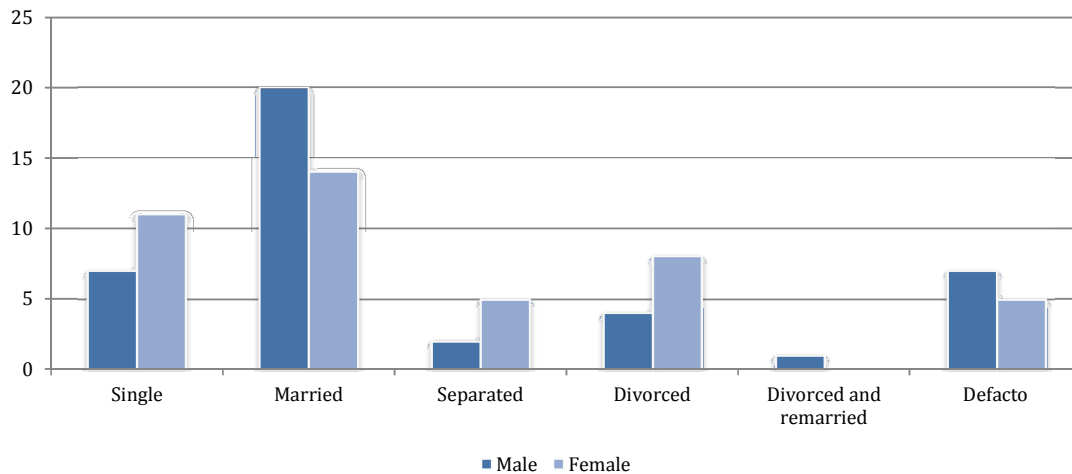
At the time of taking the survey, participants (n=84) predominantly resided in New South Wales (36), followed by Queensland (26%, 22), Victoria (15%, 13), Tasmania (6%, 5), South Australia (5%, 4), and both the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and Western Australia (1%, 2) (Figure 2). No participants from the Northern Territory were recorded. No participant reported that they currently resided overseas. This should not be taken as a distribution of survivors across Australia but, rather, is likely to be reflective of the support networks that provided advertising for this project. These networks are primarily represented officially in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia. It should be noted news media coverage of the survey launch was as widespread in Western Australia as in its originating state of Queensland.



**Figure 2: Current residence by state (n=84)**

*Marital status*

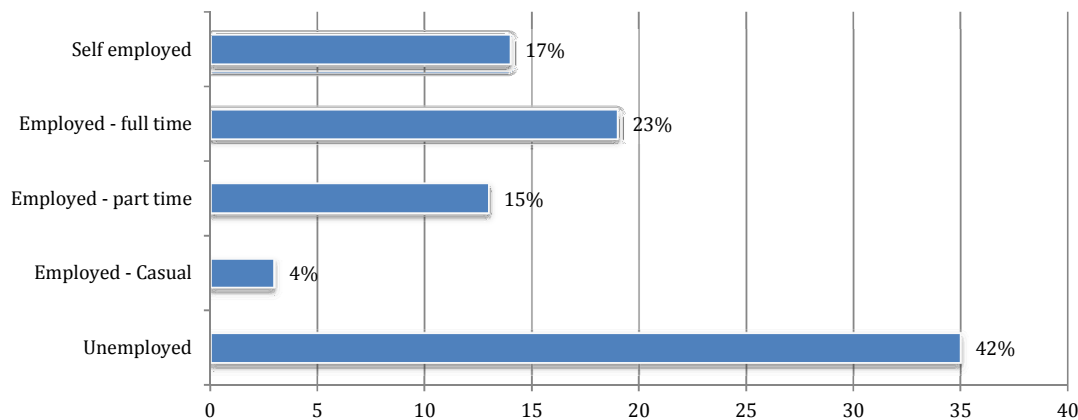
Participants (n=84) reported being in a range of relationships with 40% (34) identifying as married, followed by 21% (18) single, 14% (12) divorced, 8% (7) as separated, 14% (12) in defacto relationships and 1% (1) identifying as divorced and remarried. When considered by sex, men (49%, 20), particularly in the 36-45 age range (45%, 10), were most likely to identify as married. Marriage was also strongly represented in the female cohort (33%, 14; however female participants were also more likely than male participants to report being single (26%, 11, 17%, 7, respectively) and divorced (19%, 8, 10%, 4, respectively) (Figure 3).



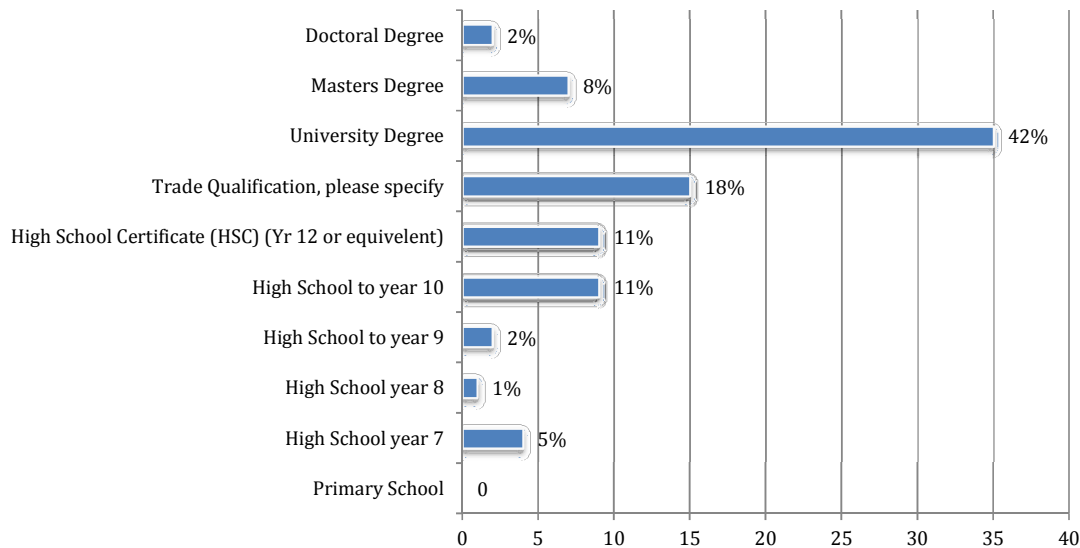
**Figure 3: Marital status (n=84)**

*Employment and education*

Forty-two percent (35) of participants in this study (n=84) reported being unemployed at the time of the study (Figure 4). This is interesting given that 52% of participants (44) had achieved higher education in the form of a degree or postgraduate qualification. The majority of participants (92%; 77) had achieved year 10 as a minimum level of education with only 9% (8) of participants falling below this marker (Figure 5). Of the 18% (15) of participants who reported achieving a trade qualification, a range of occupations were represented including nursing and panel beating



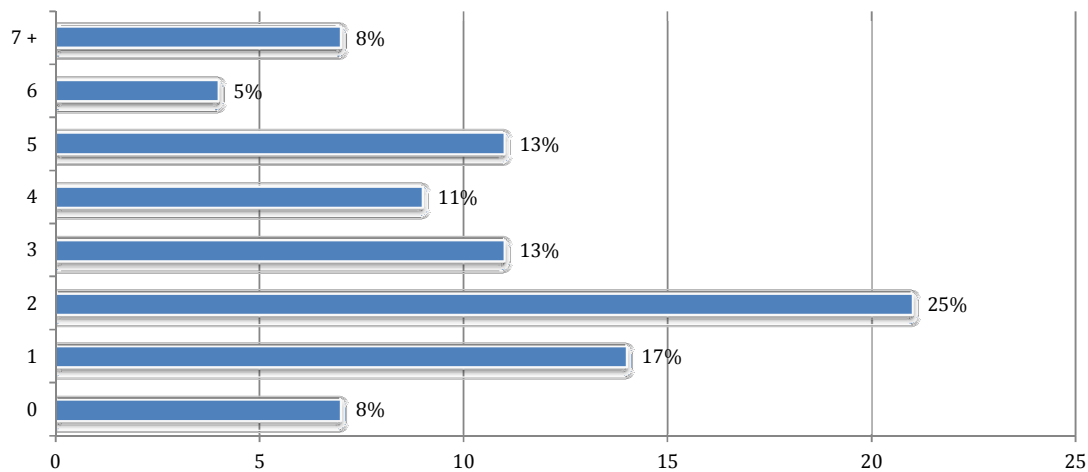
**Figure 4: Employment status (n=84)**



**Figure 5: Education (n=84)**

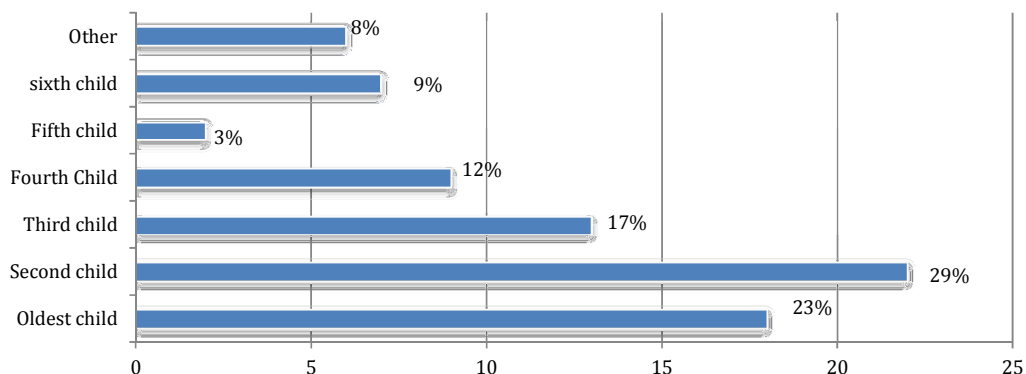
### Childhood family dynamics

To provide some context to the occurrence of CSA by PICIs, participants were asked a range of questions regarding their childhood family circumstances. These included questions on the number of siblings, birth order, residency status, presence of other forms of abuse and perceptions of parental religiosity. Two-child families comprised 17% (14) of the sample (n=84). Larger families were represented in this study with 25% (21) of participants reporting that they had two siblings, comprising a family of three children (Figure 6).



**Figure 6: Number of siblings (n=84)**

Participants tended to be higher in the birth order of their families with 52% (40) of those responding to this question (n=77) reporting they were the oldest or second child in their family. This is not surprising given that 50% (42) of all participants (n=84) reported being from families with a maximum of three children (Figure 7). Only 8% of participants reported being an only child. The majority of participants (90%; 76) spent most of their childhood residing with at least one parent with only 10% (8) residing in state care outside of the home.



**Figure 7: Birth order (n=77)**

*Parental religiosity and childhood factors*

Understanding the presence of multiple forms of abuse and the impact on vulnerability is not a straightforward task. There is extensive recognition that children who are sexually abused are vulnerable to further sexual abuse as a child and sexual violence as an adult (Reid and Sullivan, 2009). It is also recognised that, within family homes, there are often multiple forms of child abuse present, including exposure to domestic violence, physical abuse of children, and emotional and psychological abuse as well as neglect (Dong et al., 2003; Kenny and Wurtele, 2012). Where multiple factors are present, the variables of poverty and/or low socio economic status and single parent households are contentious subjects that require further research to clarify the interaction between multiple vulnerabilities or perceived vulnerabilities (Vandeven and Newton, 2006; Anam et al., 2006). Participants in this study were asked about a range of factors including the presence of other forms of abuse, illness, disability, and parental substance abuse (n=60) (Figure 8). Perceptions of parental commitment to religion were cross tabulated with the presence or absence of other childhood factors in order to assess any potential relationship between variables.

Participants were asked to rate the religiosity of their parents (n=80 for responses to mothers' religiosity; n=78 for fathers' religiosity) in the form of 'commitment to religion' (Figure 9). It is interesting to note that 42% (34) of participants reported perceiving their mother's commitment to religion being 'very strongly committed'. In total, 57% (46) of participants reported their mother's commitment being either very committed or very strongly committed. Twenty-seven per cent (22) of participants reported maternal commitment to religion as somewhat committed or not committed at all. In comparison, 36% (28) of participants reported that their fathers were 'not committed at all' to religion, with a further 13% (10) reporting that their fathers were 'somewhat committed. Twenty-one per cent (17) reported that their fathers were strongly committed and 18% (14) reported that their fathers were very strongly committed to religion. In this sample of participants it is evident that there was a perception of parents' commitment to religion as being clearly marked by gender, particularly at opposite extremes. This dynamic becomes interesting when compared with the presence of other factors in the home such as domestic violence, parental substance abuse and other forms of child abuse such as physical and emotional abuse. This is briefly discussed below.

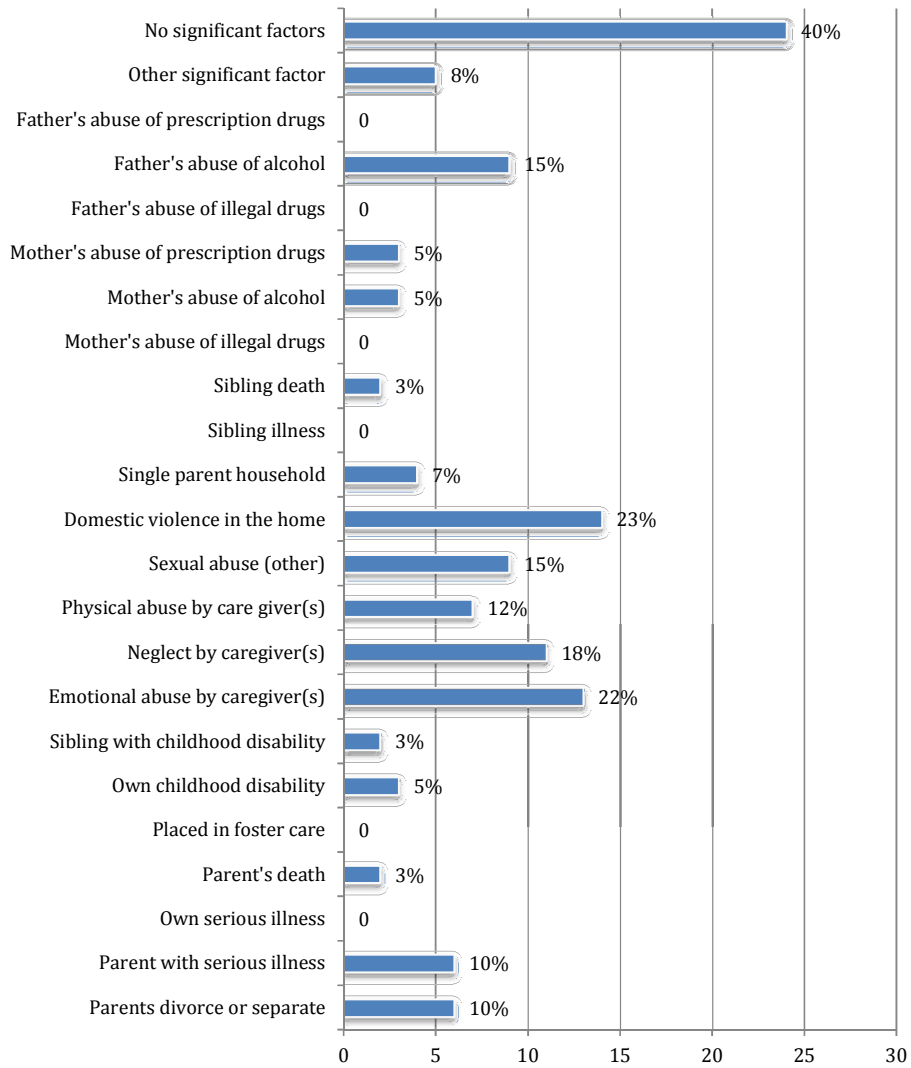


Figure 8: Significant factors in childhood (n=60)

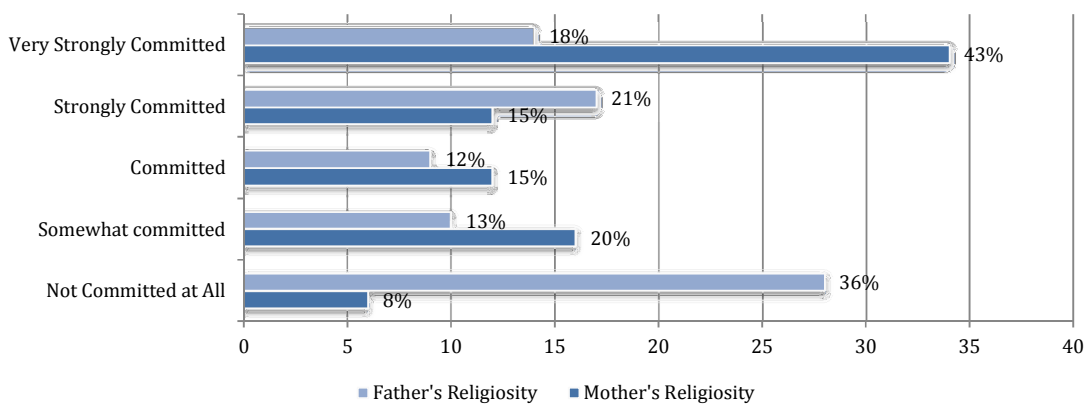
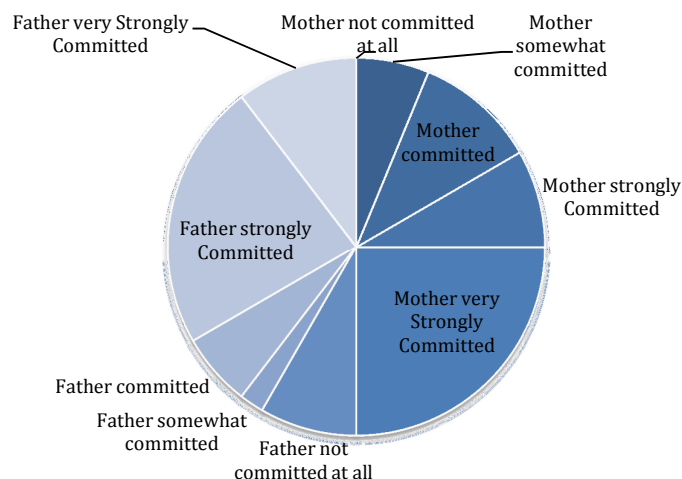


Figure 9: Parental religiosity (mother, n=80; father, n=78)

*Parental religiosity and other vulnerabilities*

The role of religiosity in parents, as a potential protective factor, is complex and, as with all vulnerabilities, exists in a broader context. Forty percent (24) of participants report experiencing no other adverse circumstances in their childhood, such as other forms of abuse, illness, disability, or parental substance abuse, at the time that the abuse occurred (n=60). This figure was higher than anticipated given that many studies point to co-morbidity of child abuse and its role in creating vulnerability in children to further the perpetration of abuse (Dong et al., 2003; McCoy and Keen, 2009). When perceptions of parental religiosity are cross-tabulated with the absence of other significant factors, we see that a maternal very strong commitment (55%, 12) and paternal strong commitment (46%, 11) to religion appear as dominant in the data. Male participants (67%, 16) were more likely to report the absence of other significant factors than female participants (33%, 8) (Figure 10). It is interesting to note that six of the ten participants who reported a single incident of abuse only also reported having no other significant factors present in their childhood. Similarly five of the ten participants that reported experiencing 'frequent incidents over a short period of time' also reported having no other significant factors. These numbers are too small to draw solid conclusions but raise interesting questions as to the effect of other forms of child abuse, or the absence thereof, and the duration of the perpetration of CSA.



**Figure 10: Absence of significant other factors (n=24)**

Conversely 60% (36) of participants reported one or more adverse circumstances at the time in which the abuse occurred (n=60). What these data indicate is that a lack of adverse circumstances does not ensure a protective environment for children, and also that adverse circumstances in childhood should be seriously considered as a risk factor for CSA. Such factors include parental divorce, domestic violence and other forms of child abuse; and this has been recognised in other literature (Olafson, 2011; Davies and Jones, 2012). This study also supports research that identifies factors such as parental alcohol abuse and co-occurrence of childhood physical, emotional and sexual abuse (Dong, Anda, Dube, Giles and Felletti 2003, Horner 2010: 358-359). As one participant stated of the individual that abused:

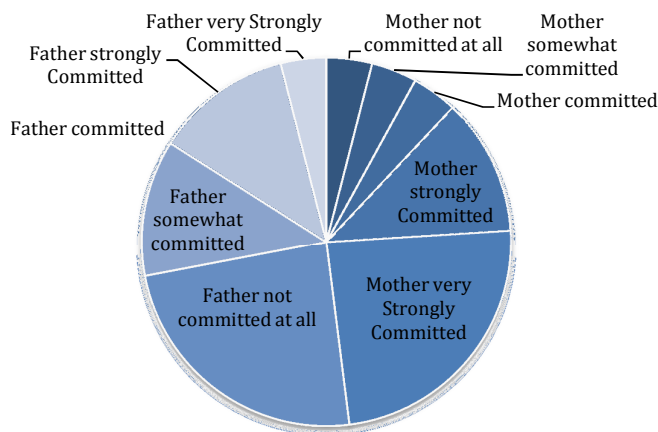
He was a photographer and taught me how to use the camera, how 2 [sic] get shots, develop films etc. etc. Then he began eating dinner and drinking with my father after finishing up the maths tutoring with my older sister. The tutoring was for free of course. My parents were both drunks and my dad very violent and so once he realised this he began bringing bottles of wine with him every Friday

night, he would tutor my sister, my mum would cook him dinner and he would eat with us and then he would get my parents drunk.

In this survivor's perspective, multiple vulnerabilities and abusive dynamics in the home have been identified and manipulated by the perpetrator of abuse. Further, the specific interests of the child and the needs of siblings are targeted here as means to integrate into the family unit and groom multiple individuals in the family.

*Parental religiosity and domestic violence*

Twenty-three percent (14) of participants who answered this question (n=60) reported the presence of domestic violence in their childhood home. This is consistent with literature which points to the presence of domestic violence as a significant vulnerability to other forms of child abuse including sexual abuse (Bowen, 2000; Herrenkohl et al., 2008; Avery et al., 2002). Those participants who reported the presence of domestic violence in their childhood homes were also more likely to report maternal very strong or strong commitment to religion and low, or no, paternal commitment to religion. Of the 12 cases that reported on the religiosity of both parents, six reported a maternal very strong commitment to religion in conjunction with a paternal very low level of commitment to religion (Figure 11).



**Figure 11: Presence of domestic violence in childhood home (n=14)**

Foss and Warnke (2003) recognise that women who identify with fundamentalist protestant values experienced particular cultural and gendered barriers to seeking assistance outside the home but also often fell between the gaps of assistance offered within religious community. The strength of this approach is that it recognises Christianity as culturally formative for individuals and, as such, the role of Christian community in informing expectations of gender and influencing women's experiences of violence (Foss and Warnke, 2003; Wendt, 2008; Jankowski et al., 2011)

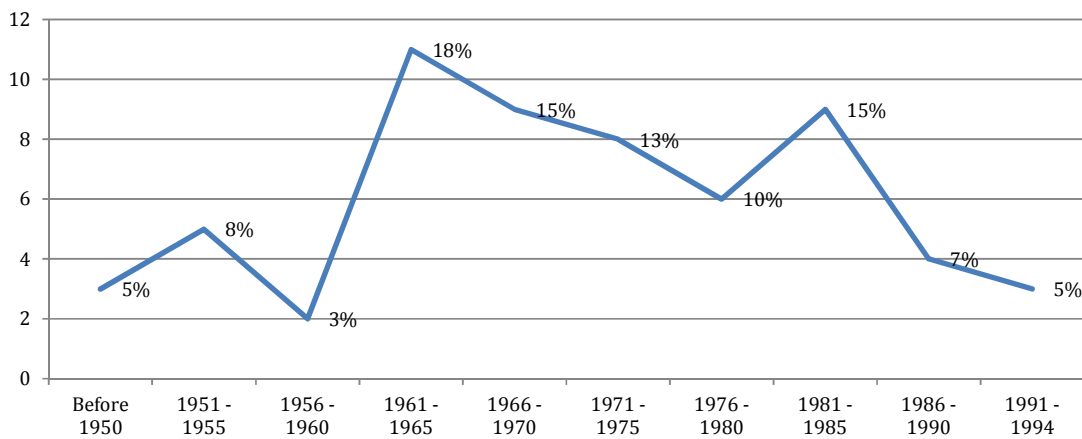
**5. Nature of abuse**

Participants were asked a range of questions about the year that their abuse began, their age at the time the location where the abuse occurred, and what acts the abuse constituted. These questions were designed to achieve a comprehensive picture of the nature of CSA by PICIs. As most studies are focussed on either offenders within religious institutions or institutional features that enable and cover over CSA, the victim's perspective of what occurred is often limited to accounts recorded in official complaints (Parkinson et al., 2012; Hogan, 2011). Again, the significance of first-hand accounts of the perpetration of CSA cannot be underestimated and the courage of survivors is to be commended.

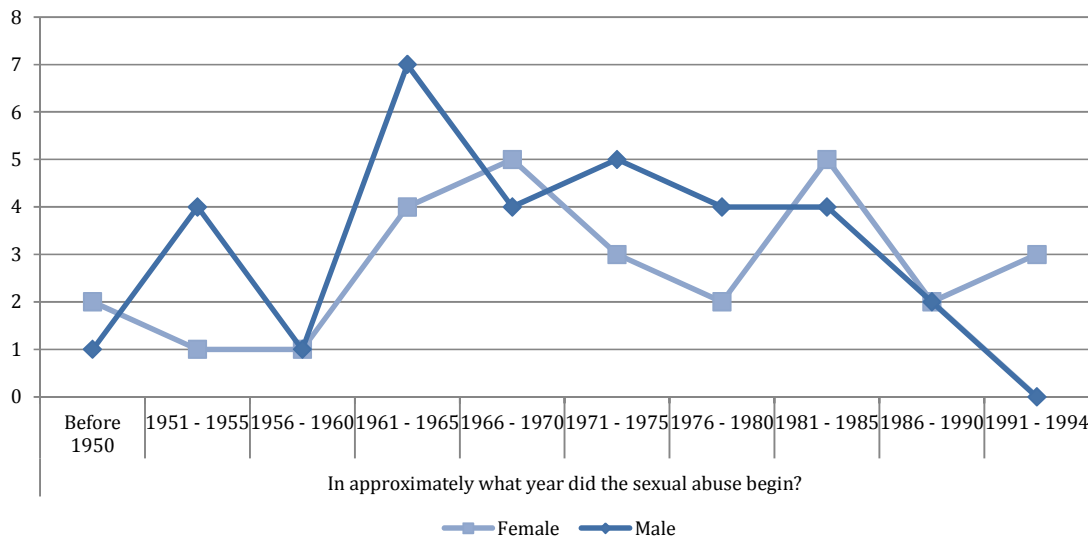


*Year of onset of abuse*

Seventy-one per cent (43) of single perpetrator abuse reported in this study (n=60) occurred between 1961 and 1985 (Figure 12). As a retrospective study, these data are impacted by the ability of participants to recall specific years. Smith, Rengifo and Vollman (2008) report a specific trajectory of abuse by Catholic clergy in the USA. This study relied on data gathered from the John Jay (2004) study to reach its conclusions (Smith et al., 2008). The John Jay studies (2004; Terry et al. 2011) clearly report that the peak of abuse in the USA occurred in the 1970s (Terry, 2008). Unlike the John Jay studies (Terry et al., 2011), the reported onset of abuse in this current research project peaked in the early to mid-1960s with a steady decline to a smaller peak in the early 1980s. Figure 13 shows that this pattern varies slightly when reports are considered by sex of the participant. Direct comparisons are difficult, however, as the John Jay studies have a much larger cohort and relied on a different data source. The decline in abuse from the early 1960s in this study does not represent a significant drop in numerical value; a pattern is evident, however.



**Figure 12: Year of onset of single perpetrator abuse (n=60)**

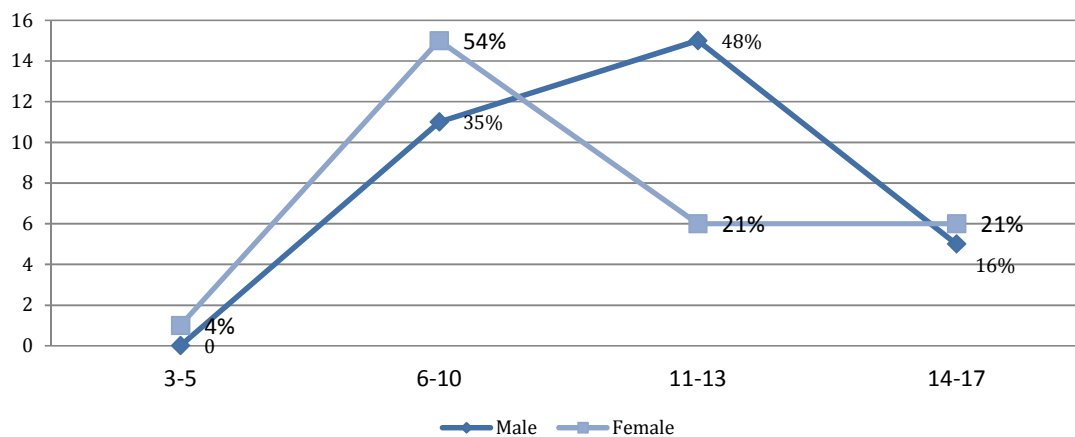


**Figure 13: Year of onset by gender (female n=28, male n=32)**

*Age of onset of abuse*

Studies have considered the age of onset of abuse in the context of therapeutic intervention, family dynamics, consequences of intervention, and effective criminal justice where disclosure occurs at a young age (Stanley, 2011; Hobbs, 2011; David M. Fergusson et al., 1997). In this study 44% (26) of participants who identified the age that abuse commenced (n=59) reported onset at between six and ten years of age (Figure 14). Females (54%, 15) were more likely than males (35%, 11) to report the onset of abuse occurring between six and ten years of age. Forty-eight percent (15) of males and 21% of females (6) reported the onset of abuse as occurring between 11 and 13 years of age. This indicates that, for males, the onset of abuse was likely to occur later, in the ephebophilic category rather than in the paedophilic category. Other studies of abuse within religious institutions often point to a higher rate of ephebophilic abuse (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2004; Tallon and Terry, 2008). When taken together, those individuals who report the onset of CSA between 11 and 17 years of age represent 55% (32) of the overall sample. Even when not explicitly being used as a diagnostic definition, paedophilic offending is often discussed as the sexual abuse of children in an age range prior to ten years of age and assumed to be prior to the onset of puberty. Puberty is considered to have occurred between ten and 13 years of age (Lee et al., 2001; Pierce and Hardy, 2012).

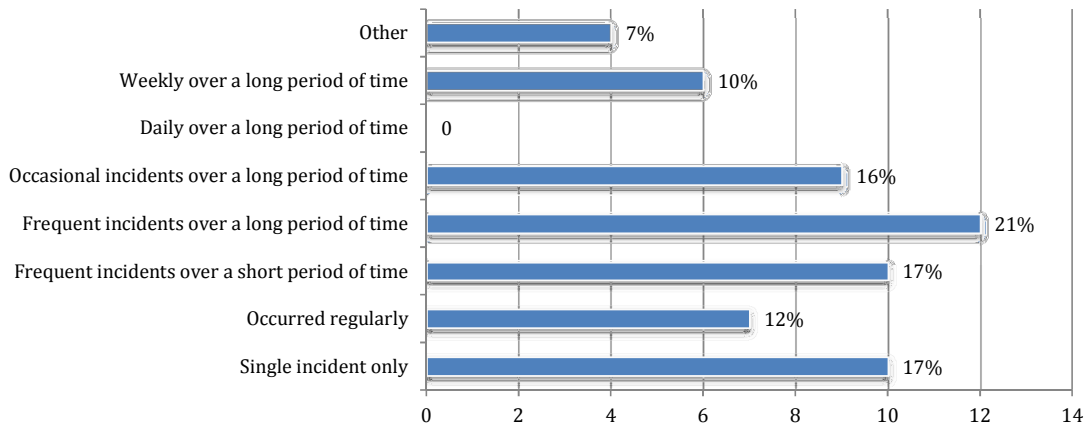
Offending against children in the pubescent age bracket of 11 to 13 years of age is referred to as ephebophilia, or hebophilia, in most studies that address CSA by PICIs (Blanchard et al., 2008; Hogan, 2011; Tallon and Terry, 2008). The Parkinson Oats and Jayakody (2012) study of the Anglican Church of Australia considered 173 reported cases of CSA within Anglican institutions, 130 involving male victims and 43 involving female victims. Parkinson, Oates and Jayakody (2012) reported that 98 males (75% of males) and 27 females (63% of females) were aged between ten and 15 years of age at the time of first abuse. Only 11% (19) of victims in total were under the age of ten (Parkinson, Oats and Jayakody 2012). Differences in reported data in this study may be attributed to a number of factors. This may include variances in data sources as both the John Jay (2004) and the Parkinson, Oats and Jayakody's (2012) studies relied on Church documents for their data. In both studies there was a significantly higher report of abuse by male victims that may coincide with ages where boys begin altar service and other activities and, thus, clergy have unsupervised access to such children (Parkinson et al., 2012; Terry, 2008). Both of these studies also examined Christian institutions with strong hierarchical structures and robust cultures where the role of Clergy as spiritual guide, teacher and role model has been noted to amplify a child's vulnerability to cultures that may enable abuse (Benkert and Doyle, 2009b).



**Figure 14: Age of onset by gender (female n=28, male n=31)**

*Frequency and duration of abuse*

The majority of literature which specifically addresses CSA in Christian institutions has established and addressed offending patterns in relation to sexual offenders through data such as reports to Christian institutions and reports to Police (Tallon and Terry, 2008; Terry and Ackerman, 2008; Smith et al., 2008; Hogan, 2011). The frequency and duration of CSA has been associated with sexual and relational functioning as an adult, attachment patterns in relationships, criminal offending, sexual offending and a range of other, mostly negative, life outcomes for survivors (McKillop et al., 2012; Larson and Lamont, 2005; Horner, 2010; Swanson et al., 2003). The frequency of abuse was a subjective measure in this study. This measure does not explore specific time frames in months, days or years. Although this limits the exact measure of offences, it can afford insight into survivors' perceptions of the duration over which the abuse continued. The difficulty with identifying specific abuse patterns by incidences reported in specific time frames is that such questioning can lock participants into reporting patterns that are not consistent with their ways of recalling or telling about abusive experiences (Reavey and Brown, 2009; Draucker and Martsof, 2008). Although such specific information is undoubtedly helpful, it does not always allow the inevitable flexibility necessary for survivor recall (Crowley, 2007; Stokes et al., 2008). These questions were designed by survivors to reflect what they perceived as their remembered experiences, whilst still giving some sense of the frequency of abusive incidents over time. Although such instability may cause difficulties for researchers and criminal justice institutions, it is reflective of what is often a survivor's experience of recalling abusive instances in descriptive, rather than prescriptive, ways (Connolly and Don Read, 2006).



**Figure 15: Frequency of abuse (n=58)**

Participants (36%, 19) most frequently report abuse as occurring for less than 12 months (Figure 15). Only 17% (10) of participants reported a single incident only. The average number of incidents cannot be extracted from this data. Although the term was not specifically defined, 21% (12) report frequent incidents over a 'long period of time' indicating an extended period of regular abuse. Another 17% (10) report frequent incidents over a short period of time (Figure 16). Participant responses indicate that abusive events varied in their frequency but were often sustained over a period of time that was significant for participants. One participant who identified with the other category said 'every Friday evening and at school when he made the opportunities'; another said 'Blackouts stop me from giving you a pattern'. Whilst some patterns of offending were opportunistic in nature, participants identified a specific intentionality and 'grooming' by perpetrators.

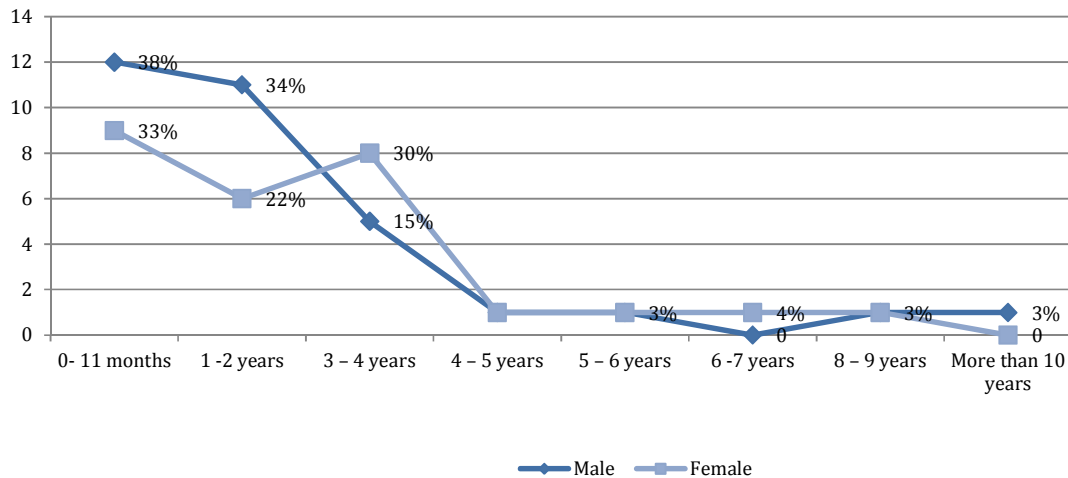


Figure 16: Duration of abuse by gender (female n=27, male n=32)<sup>2</sup>

Parkinson, Oats and Jayakody (2009) report that long-term abuse with multiple incidents occurring in up to five year relationships were not uncommon in reports made to the Anglican Church of Australia. In that study, male participants were more likely to report abusive relationships of more than three years. Data from the John Jay studies focused on offenders rather than individual victims, and found that the average number of years that abusive behaviours persisted could be differentiated by number of victims each priest had. In short, the more victims an abusive cleric had, the longer the period of time the abuse of each victim was likely to occur (Terry, 2008). For those clerics who were reported to have only one victim, the average time of abuse was 1.58 years but up to 21 years (Terry, 2008).

*Description of abuse*

Studies that measure the severity of abuse and subsequent life outcomes have been critiqued as being binary in nature and failing to consider CSA as a continuum (Loeb et al., 2011). A thorough understanding of abuse as a continuum includes considering not only the nature of acts that occurred but also the context of the relationship in which the abuse occurred (Silk et al., 1995; Reese-Weber and Smith, 2011). Participants were asked to identify the acts that abuse constituted (Table 1). In total, 32 males and 27 females answered this question (n=59). Forty-seven percent (28) of participants identified that they had experienced touching of genitals outside of clothing, whilst 71% (42) of participants identified the contact offence 'they touched my genitals inside of my clothing'. When broken down by gender, 59% (16) of female participants and 81% (26) of male participants experienced direct genital 'fondling'. Over half of the female participants (52%, 14) reported vaginal penetration with a finger. Only three (11%) of the 27 female participants reported vaginal penetration with a penis, whilst 19% (11) of participants overall (including one female participant) reported penetration of the anus by a penis. In total, 22% (13) of participants reported that they were made to perform oral sex on the perpetrator with only marginal differences between male and female participants. When broken down by gender, 25% (8) of males and 11% (3) of female participants experienced oral sex being performed on them by the perpetrator. One participant reported watching oral sex being performed on another child. Three (9%) male participants reported being forced to perform sexual acts with a peer. Masturbatory offences were broken down into two categories; 31% (10) of male participants and 26% (7) of female participants reported that they were made to masturbate the offender, whilst, 16% (5) of males and no female participants reported that

<sup>2</sup> Female 1= 4%; Male 1 = 3%.

they were made to masturbate in front of the perpetrator. In the 'other' category, participants reported experiencing 'in jokes' that were of a sexual nature, inappropriate touching under clothing such as 'up my skirt and back', receiving 'pornographic letters', 'faux-missionary copulation' and 'pinned me to the ground with his body weight and rubbed himself against me, clothed'. Participants were able to, and did, report more than one type of abusive act.

**Table 1: Type of abuse activity (n=59)**

<i>Type of abuse activity</i>	<i>Responders to each type of abuse activity</i>			
	<i>Males (n=32)</i>	<i>Females (n=27)</i>	<i>Persons (n=59)</i>	<i>Percentage of n persons</i>
Kissing on the mouth	7	7	14	24
Watching pornography together	5	1	6	10
They touched my breasts outside of my clothing	0	13	13	22
They touched my breasts inside of my clothing	0	13	13	22
They touched my genitals outside of my clothing	17	11	28	47
They touched my genitals inside of my clothing	26	16	42	71
They made me perform oral sex on them	7	6	13	22
They performed oral sex on me	8	3	11	19
They made me masturbate in front of them	5	0	5	8
They made me masturbate them	10	7	17	29
They masturbated in front of me	4	8	12	20
Anal penetration with a finger	5	2	7	12
Anal penetration with an object	0	1	1	2
Anal penetration with their penis	10	1	11	19
Vaginal penetration with a finger	0	14	14	24
Vaginal penetration with an object	0	4	4	7
Vaginal penetration with their penis	0	3	3	5
I was made to perform sexual acts with a peer	3	0	3	5
I was photographed in sexual positions	1	2	3	5
Other, please explain	2	6	8	14

Parkinson, Oats and Jayakody (2012) found that 59% of reports made by females included acts of fondling. Fondling of male participants is not reported on in that study. In terms of fondling the perpetrator, the Anglican Church study reports that 26% of males and 13% of females reported 'fondling the perpetrator' (Parkinson et al., 2012). Twenty-eight percent (28%) of females reported vaginal intercourse, 30% of males reported anal sex and 40% of boys and 15% of girls reported oral sex in the same study (Parkinson et al., 2012). The category of oral sex is not broken down in the study. Terry (2008) reports that 57.25% of reported cases of abuse involved touching under victims' clothes and 56.80% over victims' clothes. In the same study, clerics performed oral sex in 27.30% of cases and victims in 18.28%. Penile penetration or an attempt at such was reported in 25.07% of cases but is not defined by gender or by vaginal or anal penetration. Mutual masturbation is reported to occur in 18.19% of cases and 'masturbation' in 14.59% (Terry, 2008)). Terry (2008) points out that few cases involved only minor levels of abuse and most cases involved more than one type of act.

### **Perpetrator role, grooming behaviours and context**

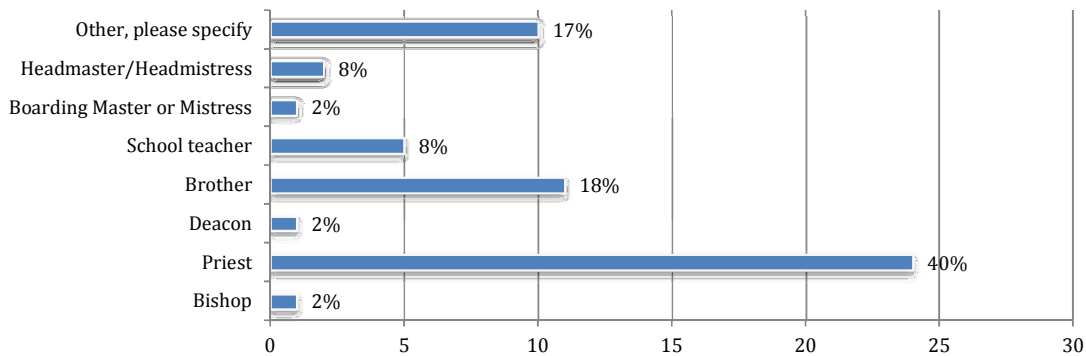
Much debate internationally centres on the number of perpetrators within religious institutions and the management of allegations of child sexual abuse by religious hierarchy. The John Jay studies (Terry, 2008) estimated that four percent of priests in the Catholic Church had perpetrated CSA. It is recognised that this figure is not likely to be accurate because, with all sexual abuse, there are difficulties with under-reporting by victims (Terry, 2008). Also, surveying members of the Clergy as to their patterns of victimising others has the difficulties of all perpetrator studies, with the added difficulty of strong institutional factors that encourage secrecy and closed systems of reporting (Doyle, 2006; Doyle et al., 2006; Robertson, 2010). Members of the Catholic Clergy have been surveyed in terms of their sexuality and sexual relationships in a number of studies, with insightful and interesting results (Doyle et al., 2006; Keenan, 2012; Plante, 2007).

All reported perpetrators in this study were male and the majority were Priests. In conversations with support workers, information about female perpetrators of CSA within religious institutions was revealed to the author but this information was not borne out in the research data. The commission of CSA by female religious personnel is an area that would benefit from research, particularly given anecdotal accounts of the sexualisation of physical punishment and female religious personnel acting as co-offenders in sending children to abusive clergy under the guise of spiritual guidance or discipline (Pasko, 2010; Travers, 2006). As stated above, however, the evidence of this is primarily anecdotal and so should be treated with caution.

Significant international studies have considered the role and function of perpetrators. Again, this has primarily been in relation to Roman Catholic Churches. In this context, there has been extensive work conducted with not only perpetrators but also into management systems and, in particular, Bishops and Higher Catholic authorities who have concealed and mismanaged abuse, contributing to further perpetration of abuse (Bruni and Burkett, 2002; Doyle and Rubino, 2003; Fawley-O'Dea, 2004). Much of this research cites work that identifies the 'immaturity' and poor professional, sexual and social development of Catholic clergy throughout the time that CSA was considered to be most prevalent (Keenan, 2012; Doyle et al., 2006). Keenan (2012) takes this research further and suggests typologies of clergy offenders in the Catholic Church based on extensive examinations of reported international cases. Works such as Doyle et al. (2006) consider an extensive range of historical documents and Catholic processes in order to contextualise the response to perpetrators and institutional factors that facilitate the perpetration of abuse. The John Jay studies and the Anglican Church of Australia study consider perpetrator dynamics including role and context of abuse (Parkinson et al., 2012; Perillo et al., 2008; Terry and Ackerman, 2008).

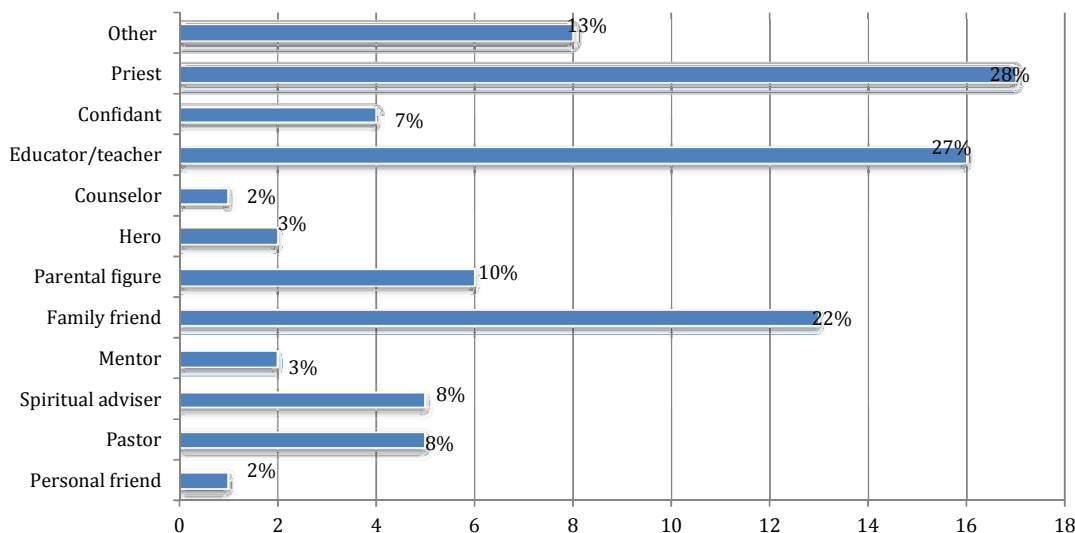
#### *Perpetrator role*

Consistent with other studies, the role of perpetrators at the time of the offence (n=60) was predominantly identified as 'Priest' (24, 40%). This is followed by the category of 'Brother' (11, 18%). The category of 'other' (10, 17%) included reports that the role of the perpetrator included 'worker in the home', Monsignor, Ministerial Servant, Sunday School helper/driver, Sunday School bus chaperone, School Chaplain, Lay Preacher/Church Leader, Elder, Brother/Teacher in a Religious School and Choirmaster (Figure 17). For many participants, even when the role of Priest was identified, often this was associated with some form of educational setting.



**Figure 17: Perpetrator role at time of offence (n=60)**

Where a victim’s relationship with the perpetrator of abuse at the time the abuse started was identified (n=60) and examined, the complexity of dynamics becomes apparent (Figure 18). Although the relationship descriptors of Priest (17, 28%) and educator/teacher (16, 27%) remain dominant, we see that family friend (13, 22%) also appears as significant. When this is considered in the context of participant descriptions of perpetrators integrating themselves into their families and perceptions of grooming, this becomes increasingly important. In the category of ‘other’ (8, 13%), participants described their relationships as ‘Infirmiry Brother’, ‘friend’s Uncle’, ‘authority figure’, ‘non-existent’, ‘Brother’, ‘memory is still blank’, and ‘He was a friend of my mothers, who encouraged her to join the church he was in. He acted as a carer due to the DV’. In this instance the domestic violence was between the participant’s parents.



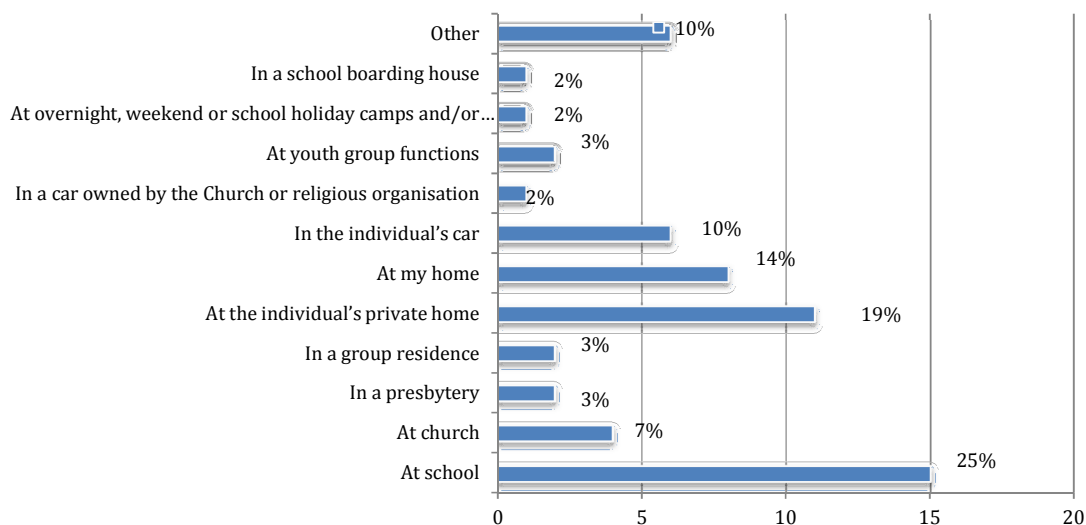
**Figure 18: Descriptor of relationship at the time of abuse (n=60)**

The John Jay studies indicate that more priests than members of religious orders were responsible for CSA (Terry, 2008). These studies also examined the individual contexts and psychology of abusive priests (Terry et al., 2011; Tallon and Terry, 2008; Mercado et al., 2008), something that is beyond the scope of this study. Similarly, the Anglican Church study reports that the majority (58.6%) of allegations were made against ‘clergy’ as opposed to ‘candidate for clergy’ (6.1%), ‘pastoral employee’ (21.8%), or ‘volunteer’ (13.5%). Of significance across all three studies presented here is that the overwhelming majority of allegations are made against

individuals directly employed by religious organisations, rather than volunteers or subsidiary organisations. The primary role of those accused was also linked with spiritual education, guidance and ministry. In this sense, the role of clericalism is affirmed as an important consideration in understanding the perpetration of CSA by PICIs (Benkert and Doyle, 2009b; Doyle, 2003; Doyle, 2006).

*Locations where abuse took place*

The role of schooling in the perpetration of CSA was evident in the location where abuses took place (n=59), with 25% (15) of participants reporting that the incidents of CSA primarily occurred at school (Figure 19). This was followed by 19% (11) of participants who reported that the CSA primarily occurred at the private residence of the perpetrator and 14% (6) of participants reporting the CSA occurred primarily in their own home. Interestingly, only one participant reported that they were sexually assaulted in a boarding house. Although those children who boarded at school experienced a higher rate of abuse than those who only attended a Christian School, in this research, boarding houses themselves did not appear to be major sites of abuse. This may be explained by a number of factors including the level of privacy usually sought for the perpetration of sexual offences and the secrecy that normally surrounds its perpetration (McAlinden, 2006; Staller, 2012; Terry et al., 2011). Although there are other reports of children being sexually abused in boarding dorms or boarding houses, this information was not reported here (Balboni, 2011; Terry et al., 2011). When broken down by the role of the perpetrator, schools continued to be the dominant site of abuse by both Priests and Brothers, with 28% (10) of participants reporting they were mostly abused at school. When broken down by gender, 34% (11) of male participants were abused and school but only 15% (4) of female participants report being primarily abused at school. In comparison, female participants were more likely to report being abused in their own home (22%, 6) than male participants (6%, 2). Male participants were also more likely to report being abused at the individual perpetrator's home (25%, 8). The four participants that reported being abused by a schoolteacher in a religious school also reported that these incidents occurred in the individual perpetrator's home. What this indicates is that, even where the official role of the perpetrator was in a religious capacity of Priest or Brother, school was a site of contact and a site of abuse. It must be taken into account, however, that, historically, religious brotherhoods were responsible for the establishment and teaching with many Catholic schools in Australia.



**Figure 19: Location of abuse (n=59)**



Of the participants in this survey (n=84), 72% (60) attended a Christian school. Of those that attended a Christian School, 62% (37) identified as being abused by someone employed to work at the school. Of those participants that attended a Christian School, 32% (19) boarded at the Christian school they attended. Of those who identified as boarding at the school, 74% (14) were abused by someone employed by the school as opposed to 26% (5) of boarding students who were abused by someone not employed by the school. This indicates that, of those participants who attended a denominational school, those who boarded were more likely to be abused than their counterparts who did not board.

The role of perpetrator as educator was reflected in comments left by research participants. Educational activities, such as extra tutoring, were used in order to gain access to students who were then abused. Further, trust placed in individuals perceived as 'educators' led to opportunities to manipulate their victims into accepting in order to create accepting discourses around abusive activities. One respondent to the survey described:

I loved singing and at school the whole class would listen to the 'ABC' Schools program for primary schools - radio. We were given singing manuscripts and the teacher would come to me and listen, in front of the class. He would kneel down and praise me in front of fellow-pupils. This drove the ego and ambition. I was told that for my voice to grow, I had to have my passages opened to allow the air to flow and the voice to grow. This led to the invitation to come to the teacher's home and have extra-curricular lessons. I was already being taught by a private music teacher - my mum would take me there and wait in the car. Very enjoyable. Nevertheless, the teacher would lobby the claim that I needed my passages 'opened' to allow the voice to grow and the air to flow. The anus was used as an academic instrument so as to allow the paedophile to convert this claim into reality. I accepted the logical explanation / justification.

Another participant said: '[Offender] was Sportsmaster and Year master - had regular access to me and others'.

The significance of using education as a tool to groom potential victims is not, of course, unique to religious schools (Fromuth, McKay and Wilson 2010). Nor were those who abused students always ordained members of clergy, as will be discussed later. Nonetheless, in environments where power differentials are so clearly apparent as those between teacher and student, the importance of understanding the role that education and spirituality play in grooming warrants further research. This is amplified where disclosure was made to other School personnel and punishment for doing so was dealt out to the victim of abuse. For many, this was in fact the case, with participants reporting that, as a result of the abuse, they did very poorly in school, acted out at school, dropped out of school at a young age, or had their unique talents and potential careers limited as a result of the trauma associated with the abuse in educational settings.

Parkinson Oats and Jayakody (2012) present data that identify the accused person's home and Church premises as the leading location of abuse. According to this study, females (23.9%) were more likely to be abused in their own home than males (6.7%). Males (21.1%) were more likely to be abused on camp than females (Parkinson et al., 2012). In the John Jay studies, the cleric's home or parish residence was the location where both males (36.6%) and females (30.7%) were most likely to experience abuse. This was followed by 'in church' (male 14.2%, female 12.9%), the victim's home (male 10.9%, females 10.4%) and in school (males 8.2%, females 11.4%).

*Grooming and silencing strategies*

Participants were asked a number of questions about grooming strategies prior to the abuse commencing, when the abuse was occurring and after the abuse had ceased (Table 2). These questions were designed around the experiences of those survivors that designed the study, common grooming strategies of child sex offenders, as well as strategies that have been noted to be specific to CSA within religious institutions (McAlinden, 2006; Staller, 2012; Terry and Ackerman, 2008; Parkinson et al., 2009). Those strategies that may be specific to religion institutions will often include some form of spiritual abuse or manipulation.

**Table 2: Grooming strategies by phase of abuse**

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Exposure to Pornography	Before	2	33	6
	During	5	41	12
	After	0	0	0
Offered alcohol	Before	8	32	25
	During	6	44	14
	After	3	39	8
Offered cigarettes	Before	7	34	21
	During	3	42	7
	After	2	39	5
Offered gifts	Before	19	39	49
	During	16	44	36
	After	9	31	29
Physical restraint	Before	15	38	39
	During	13	42	31
	After	3	39	8
Physical assault	Before	11	38	29
	During	10	42	24
	After	9	40	23
Offered special roles	Before	7	29	24
	During	12	42	29
	After#			
Made threats	Before#			
	During	14	42	33
	After#			
Fell pregnant	Before#			
	During	2	40	5
	After#			
Contracted STD	Before#			
	During	1	40	3
	After#			
Told God would punish family (if told anyone about abuse)	Before	4	37	11
	During	5	43	12
	After	2	39	5
Told God would punish them if they did not have sex (if told anyone about abuse)	Before	5	36	14
	During	1	38	3
	After	3	39	8
Told to submit to Church leaders	Before	8	39	21
	During	10	43	23
	After	5	40	13
Told to submit to Elders	Before	13	41	32
	During	16	45	35
	After	7	42	17
Refused access to significant spiritual event	Before#			
	During	2	40	5
	After	5	40	13

# This question was not asked at this stage of grooming.

### Prior to abuse commencing

Survey respondents were asked to report on perpetrator grooming strategies, including being offered alcohol, cigarettes and/or gifts and use of physical force. Being offered alcohol (25%, 8 and/or cigarettes (21%, 7) by the perpetrator prior to abuse commencing was only marginally reported by participants (Table 2). Gifts were more commonly offered with 49% (19) of participants reporting being offered gifts. For male participants, this occurred in 57% (n=13) of cases and for female participants in 38% (6). Physical assault prior to the abuse commencing was reported by 29% (11) of participants and being physically restrained by 39% (15). Forty-one percent (17) of participants in total reported being told by perpetrators that they loved them prior to the abuse commencing. Both male (30%, 7) and female (56%, 10) participants reported this strategy. Only two of the 20 (10%) male participants that answered the question reported being offered access to pornography prior to the abuse commencing. Sixteen female participants answered this question but none reported being offered access to pornography at this stage of the grooming process.

Strategies that involved some element of spirituality were also measured. Thirty-three percent (7) of male participants reported being offered special roles in church activities. No female participants reported this prior to the abuse commencing. This is perhaps best explained by the more active role that boys play in serving during services in more traditional, particularly Roman Catholic, denominations. Although not only a spiritual strategy, there are particular contexts and implications for being told to submit to one's elders within a Christian tradition – particularly where that elder is a religious leader and is telling an individual to do so (Benkert and Doyle, 2009a; Doyle, 2006). Female participants reported this strategy as occurring in 47% (9) of cases with male participants reporting it in 18% (4) of cases. Twenty-one percent (8) of participants were told that they must submit to PICIs. Only small percentages of participants report being told that God wanted them to have sex with the perpetrator (14%, 5), that they would be punished by God if they did not have sex with the perpetrator (14%, 5), or that God would punish their family if they did not comply (11%, 4).

When asked if there was anything further they would like to say about their relationship with the perpetrator prior to the abuse commencing, participants left deeply reflective and poignant comments:

After a time I began to feel very special to the priest. He was kind and affectionate and I thought he loved me.

I should have thought harder to stop them & I didn't want it to happen but at 1st I was told they would tell my family what I was doing. Crazy isn't it to think I eventually told my mum & dad both of which didn't believe me. My dad said are you trying to tell me you're a poofter. My mum strapped [sic] me on the face & told me not to make such dangerous allegations about a priest & family friend. This is really hard stuff. Opening old wounds that still haven't completely healed.

I froze the first time it happened and then through normalisation and grooming I became an active participant - my abuse lasted for four years.

These comments reflect a range of insights by participants including their understanding of the grooming process and the level to which they were caught up in processes of abuse. The feelings of being special, of believing they were loved, the rejection at disclosure and undergoing a process of normalisation through grooming are all commonly reported by survivors of CSA (Young, 1997).

#### During the time that the abuse was occurring

The number of participants that answered questions about forms of grooming while the abuse was occurring increased when compared to those who answered questions requesting information prior to abuse commencing. This may have occurred for a number of reasons including participants being more able to readily recall information about behaviours and relationships at the time the abuse was occurring and after it had stopped. In contrast to prior to the abuse commencing, four (17%) male participants and one of 19 female participants that answered the question were offered access to pornography. The instances of being offered alcohol and/or cigarettes at this phase decreased, with 14% (6) of participants reporting being offered alcohol and 7% (3) reporting being offered cigarettes. Being offered gifts remained a common theme, falling slightly for male participants (43%, 10) but remaining steady for female participants (38%, 6). Physical abuse continued to be reported by participants, with 31% (13) reporting they were physically restrained and 24% (10) reporting they were physically assaulted.<sup>3</sup>

In terms of grooming strategies that involved some specific spiritual element, 29% (12) of participants report being offered special roles whilst the abuse was occurring, 35% (16) reported being told to submit to their elders, 23% (10) reported being told to submit to PICIs and 12% (5) were told that God would punish their family if they did not comply with sexual activities (Table 2). These figures represent only a very slight increase in these strategies once the abuse had begun. At this phase, only one participant reported being told that God would punish them if they did not comply with sexual activities. Two (2, 5%) participants reported being refused access to significant spiritual events at this phase. It is not clear from the survey material if this was due to non-compliance or some other reason.

Two participants reported that they fell pregnant as a result of the sexual abuse and one participant reported contracting a sexually transmitted disease (STD) (Table 2). Participants were asked if they would like to make further comments about their relationship with the perpetrator during the time the sexual abuse was occurring. One of the participants that fell pregnant wrote:

Fell pregnant and had a secretive abortion at just 14yrs old. From 7-14yrs he threatened me with my father's violence, telling me it was my fault and I was dirty and unclean and that if my father or anyone found out they would be disgusted and that my father would kill me in his rage and that I would go to hell, as only clean sweet innocent girls get to go to heaven.

We can see from the above comment that the participant in this instance experienced highly manipulative perpetrator behaviour that used her vulnerabilities and fear of her own father's violence to compound the abuse and maintain secrecy. Evidence of spiritual elements of clericalism, grooming and abuse are present in the following statements made by participants:

At a wedding shortly afterward where I was serving for this priest, I made a remark about the stole he was wearing. I remarked that the pattern looked like a stain. He said it had run in the wash and stained and I said 'like the sin on your soul'. The following day, he came to my house and told my parents I had been suspended from altar serving for a period of time, maybe three months, because of my disrespectful remark. I was absolutely devastated and humiliated as well as ashamed as altar serving was a central part of my life as well as my four brothers and other friends in the activity. My parents accepted this without questioning the context.

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<sup>3</sup> There was a minor increase in the number of participants that answered these questions from 38 participants initially responding to both questions to 41 answering the question on physical restraint and 42 participants answering the question on physical assault.

I was denied the opportunity to make my First Communion. This is the worst thing that ever happened to me. The abuse of Church authorities has always been worse than the original abuse. I have been abused twice as an adult - once sexually, once physically - by Church authority figures.

Participant comments illustrate the significance of the spiritual context of abuse and associated strategies leveraged throughout different phases of grooming and abuse within a Christian institutional setting.

#### After the abuse stopped

The number of participants that answered questions about what occurred in their relationship with the abuser after the abuse stopped dropped slightly, but was higher than those who answered questions about their relationship prior to the abuse beginning. Most of the strategies involved a drop in the number of instances reported. This is to be expected given that, for many, their relationship with the perpetrator became distant or the perpetrator was removed. These outcomes are discussed below.

Interestingly participants who reported physical assault after the abuse stopped diminished only slightly (23%, 9). Those that reported physical restraint decreased to 8% (3), being offered alcohol decreased to 14% (6) and being offered cigarettes decreased to 7% (3). Although the number decreased, participants continued to report being offered gifts (29% 9).

Participants continued to be told by the perpetrator that they should submit to their elders and to PICIs (17%, 7 and 13%, 5 respectively (Table 2)). Five (5, 13%) participants reported that they were refused access to significant events after the abuse had stopped, marking a slight increase from the phase where the abuse was occurring. Only a small percentage of participants reported being told that they, or their family, would be punished by God if they reported the abuse to anyone (3, 8% and 2, 5% respectively). Participants were again asked if they would like to leave further comments on this phase of abuse and there is evidence of spiritual abuse and manipulation in their comments:

When I told the Nun what was happening she abused me and bashed me for 4 years, cleaning the Church and Convent and sending me to his confessional. She told me the Devil would be sleeping with me every night, told me I was only good for cleaning etc.

He disgusted me but I thought it was my fault for blundering into the room I had been invited into. My father confronted church leaders in my presence. They screamed at me. I survived by separating out what I know were related incidents. The Bishop always singled me out in a crowd even years later as someone he gave small gifts to e.g. holy cards. When as an adult I reported the incident I was banned from my parish 'for the shame I had done to the Church'.

I was continually reminded of our SPECIAL relationship. That he had saved me from going down the wrong path. That we had a special friendship

In these comments there is, again, evidence of the specific spiritual elements of the relationship with the perpetrator and the significance of responses from other PICIs.

The John Jay studies recognise grooming as a process that varies throughout phases of abuse and presents analysis of three stages: before and during abuse and after its desistence (Terry et al., 2011). The John Jay study presents data that suggest that grooming of males and females was similar but that '...males were more likely than females to be given alcohol and drugs, taken to sporting events, and allowed to stay overnight with the priests' (Terry et al., 2011): 103). According to Terry et al. (2011) the onset of grooming coincided with the commencement of

duties such as alter service. Terry et al. (2011) then turns the conversation to techniques of neutralisation employed by clergy to facilitate the continuance of abuse.

*Reason for the abuse stopping*

Participants were asked to nominate or describe reasons they believed the CSA ceased to occur; participants preferred to self-nominate (n=55). Most of these comments fell into one of five categories; some, however, fell into multiple categories. The categories allocated were 'action of avoidance taken by the victim', 'disclosure to an adult' 'independent removal of victim or perpetrator', 'unknown reason' (Figure 20) and 'other' (n=31 for 'other') (Figure 21). Actions of avoidance taken by participants included instances where they took the initiative and responsibility not to have contact with the perpetrator any longer; this included telling the perpetrator to stay away, refusing to go to Church, or in some other way refusing to see the perpetrator. Participants offered comments such as:

I made a decision for it to stop. I limited contact and stopped any physical contact despite there [sic] attempts - I wanted to know I had control - I was 17 at this stage

I refused to be home Friday afternoon to Saturday night from 14 yrs. would sleep over at friend's places and dropped all classes he taught.

I left home to escape the abuse - he came to my home so avoiding church didn't help.

I made it aware to him that I now understood what was happening to me and was not going to allow it to continue by calling out to my elder brother when he came into my bed room.

I swore at him when I was 14.10 months to fuck off get away from me.

Disclosure to an adult included a description of speaking about the abuse and an adult taking action which resulted in protection of the child. Participants made comments such as:

I told my mother, who took me to the doctor, I stopped going to church, I told him that I would tell Jesus on him (I told my mother).

When I was so tired I couldn't take it anymore, I blurted it out to my mother one morning before school. She could no longer pretend it wasn't happening, although she did not ask him to leave the house. She did not tell the police.

The category of independent removal included cases where the perpetrator was removed from the situation but this was not directly attributed to actions of the participant. This included comments such as:

I don't remember ever seeing the priest again after what happened and it may well have been because he was moved on for other reasons.

The offender left the school without notice - mid week and mid-term.

My mother left my stepfather and the DV stopped, so I no longer was forced to be in his care. Soon after he left the church.

The category of 'other' in this further breakdown was for comments that did not fit into other categories. This included:

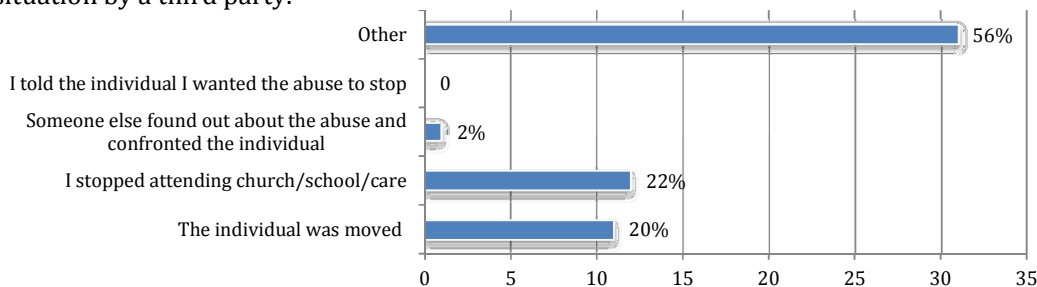
He moved on to other children.

I was brutally raped and knew things were out of control and I was losing my mind.

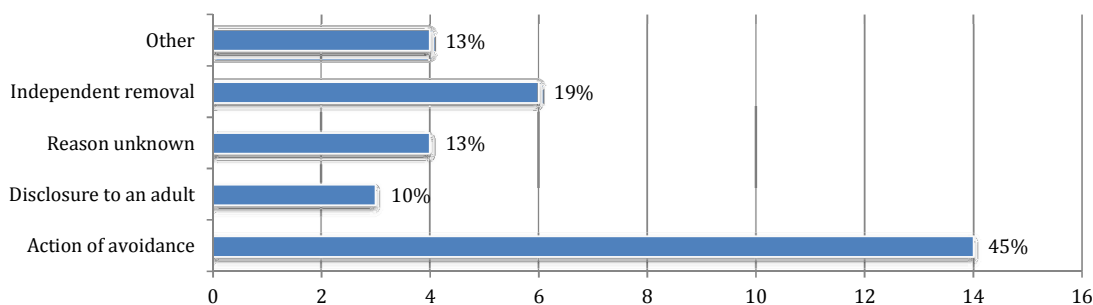
He got tired of me

I started my periods.

When both the original question and the breakdown of the original 'other' category are considered together, it is evident that the abuse mostly stopped because of the choices made by the victim to take action to end the abuse. This is followed by removal of the perpetrator from the situation by a third party.



**Figure 20: Reasons abuse stopped (n=55)**



**Figure 21: Breakdown of 'other' (n=31)**

The importance of abuse desisting because of victim-initiated action is also reported in the John Jay studies (Terry et al., 2011; Tallon and Terry, 2008). Terry et al. (2011) acknowledges that very few clergy stopped abusing because of an internal drive to do so. Some clergy stopped because of a mix of internal and external factors but victim surveys most often demonstrated that it was victims removing themselves from situations that lead to desistence from abuse (Terry et al., 2011). The Anglican Church study (Parkinson et al., 2009; Parkinson et al., 2012) does not provide significant data or analysis on the reasons for abuse ceasing.

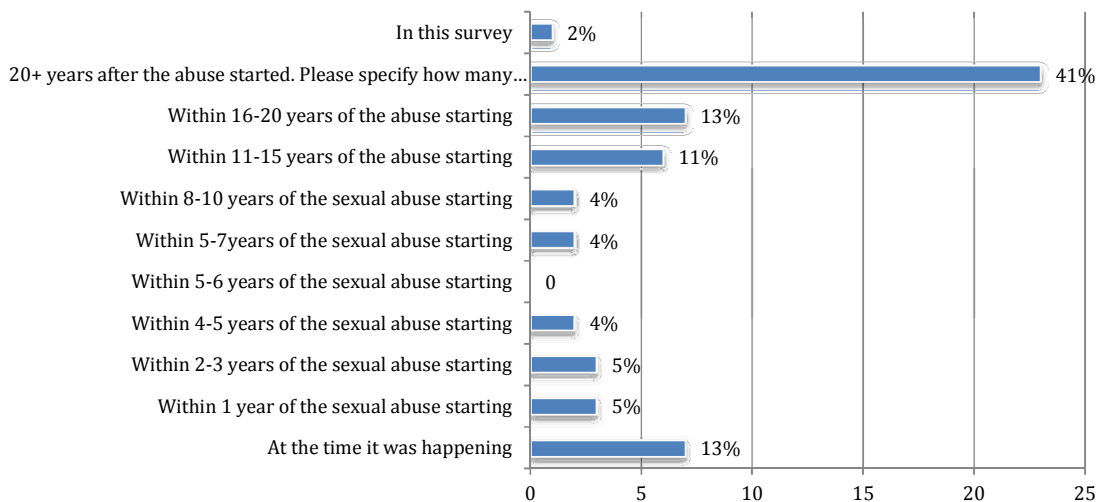
**7. Disclosure and outcomes**

Disclosure is a contentious issue in CSA and has certainly been a difficult issue in the Roman Catholic Church. Research has repeatedly shown that survivors of CSA in families and communities often do not disclose their abuse for years, if not decades, and usually after the abuse has stopped (McElvaney et al., 2012; Schaeffer et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2008). There is ample evidence from across international jurisdictions that, even when CSA by a Catholic Priest was disclosed at the time of the abuse or shortly after, survivors and their families were manipulated, disbelieved, encourage to 'forgive and forget', legally compelled to silence, or shamed into silence (Balboni, 2011; Keenan, 2012). For many survivors, the consequences of

this have been overwhelming. Although it has been recognised that these strategies were not appropriate and have contributed to the suicides of survivors, there is still significant argument as to whether such cases involve criminal negligence (Neu, 2010; Robertson, 2010; Wirenius, 2011).

*Disclosure*

In this study, 41% (23) of participants waited over 20 years to speak to someone about their abuse (n=56) (Figure 22). One participant reported waiting approximately 60 years to first speak about abuse experiences and two other participants reported waiting 50 years. Male participants (n=30) were far more likely than female participants (n=26) to wait 20 or more years to tell someone about their abuse (67%, 20, 11%, 3 respectively). Seven (27%) of female participants first spoke to someone at the time that the abuse was happening and seven (27%) additional female participants first spoke with someone within five years of the CSA commencing. When they did first speak to someone, male participants were more likely to first speak to their partner (40%, 12) than female participants (8%, 2). Female participants (n= 25) were most likely to report speaking to other PICIs (28%, 7). Doctors, school friends and counsellors were also listed by participants as those to whom they first spoke about their experiences of CSA (see Figure 22).



**Figure 22: Time of first disclosure (n=56)**

Participants were asked to describe the response from the person they told of their abuse, if that person was another adult. Participants gave mixed descriptions of the responses. Where they first disclosed to another victim of CSA, the perceived responses were generally positive; for example, participants wrote:

Extremely understanding and consoling and on the same wavelength being a fellow abuser.

They knew as they had been abused themselves. Very supportive and encouraging.

Others reported being disbelieved:

They told me it was in my head ... and I had things wrong.

Just brushed it off as him being caring.



In both of these statements, there is evidence of the other party reframing the abuse as a misunderstanding or misperception by the abuse survivor. The significance of receiving a supportive response was captured by the following comment:

They explained that what had happened was sexual abuse, they encouraged me to call them back and talk about it, they suggested that I tell my mother (I didn't), they supported me to see a counsellor face-to-face and get support to go to the police. They helped me not to kill myself.

Participants also reported that their disclosures brought clarity to others about their behaviours; examples include:

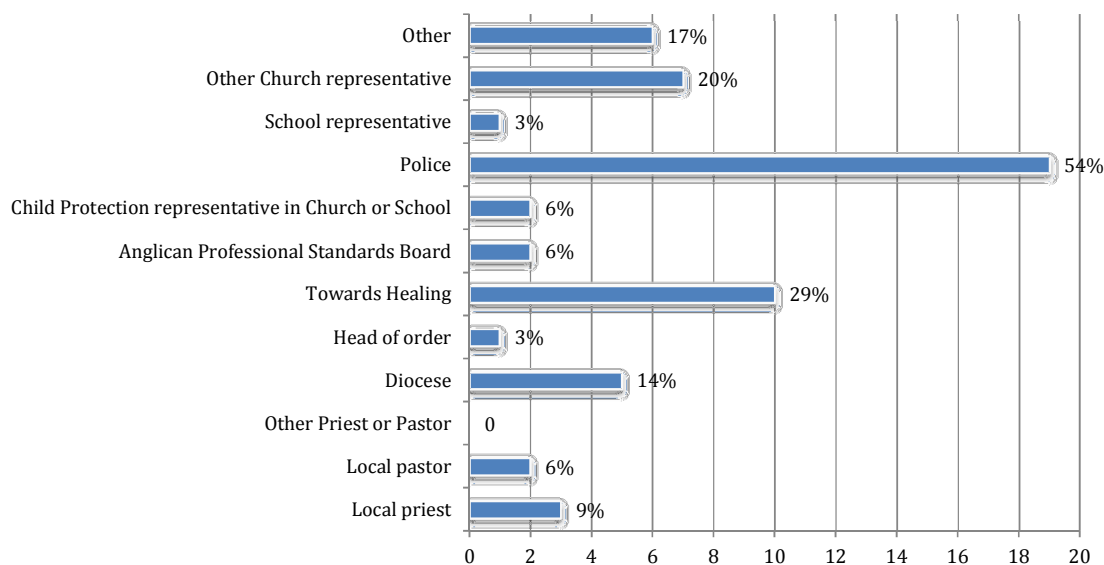
Mum didn't believe, Dad said he finally understood why I was the way I was.

They were stunned and angry at what had happened to me - The abuser was still a family friend. They rang the abuser to tell them off. They stated to me that this explained a lot of things on my behaviours.

Both the John Jay studies and the Anglican Church study acknowledge lengthy delays in disclosure and varying reasons for this (Terry et al., 2011; Parkinson et al., 2012). Given that males in each of these studies disproportionately lived with lengthy delays in disclosure, it is important that future research consider barriers to male disclosure of CSA at the time of abuse and in the years after abuse (Homma et al., 2012; Priebe and Svedin, 2008; Schonbucher et al., 2012). Although beyond the scope of this study, such an analysis is important given that the sexual abuse of boys in Christian institutions is one area where this type of abuse is widely recognised.

*Official reporting and responses*

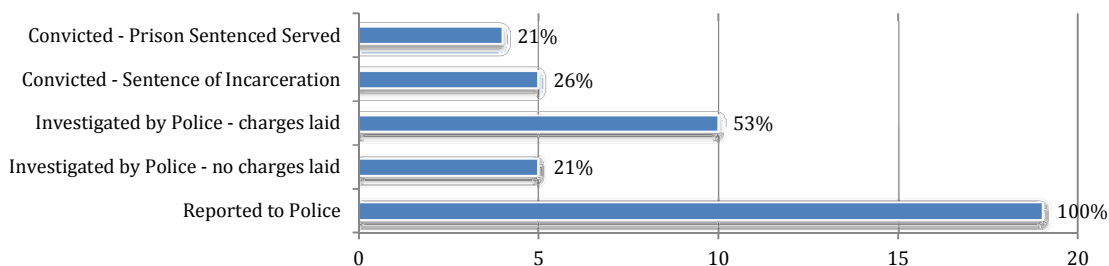
Participants were asked a series of question on their experiences of officially reporting their experiences of CSA (n=35). Several participants had officially reported to more than one person or organisation. Of those participants that had officially reported their abuse, 54% (19) had done so to the police. Representing survivors from Catholic diocese other than Victoria, 29% (10) officially reported to Towards Healing. Other participants stated that they officially reported to a Bishop or Archbishop (Figure 23).



**Figure 23: Organisation or position of official report (n=35)**

### Reports to police

Where the matter was reported to Police (n=19), 53% (10) of cases resulted in investigation and charges being laid (Figure 24). It is important to bear in mind that, although this percentage is considerably higher than is normally the case in sexual assault cases, it is, nevertheless, representative of a very small sample and a particular category of CSA that has received significant media coverage internationally (Daly and Bouhours, 2010; Keenan, 2012). Significant coverage of a particular issue, education, community outrage and political pressure may increase the willingness of police to investigate and lay charges. These data indicate that participants were significantly more likely to be 'believed' by Police and receive some form of criminal justice outcome. In comparison, as the title of this report encapsulates, participants report feeling disbelieved when disclosures were made to family members and Christian institutions. This distinction provides fertile ground for further research into institutional cultures and their significance where disclosures of CSA by PICIs are made.



**Figure 24: Outcome of report to police (n=19)**

The Anglican Church study reports on outcomes of reports to legal authorities (Parkinson et al., 2009). Parkinson et al. (2009:35) distinguished between outcomes of reports made prior to the year 2000 and those made post-2000. According to this study '... of the 44 cases that were known to go to court 53% ended in the accused person being convicted'. This is a conviction rate that is significantly higher than CSA in the community (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2010). From the John Jay data, Piquero et al. (Piquero et al., 2008) provide a model from which the likelihood of a police investigation into allegations against clergy can be predicted. This model relies on five variables:

... whether the cleric was married (no/yes, 1.19%), whether the cleric had any sort of substance abuse history including alcohol or drugs (no/yes, 18.63%), whether the cleric was previously abused (no/yes, 6.83%), the age at the first reported abuse by the cleric (mean = 38.90 years), and a count of the number of different problematic behaviors in the cleric's personnel files (mean 0.43). (Piquero et al. 2008:594)

Interestingly, three variables emerged from this model as significant including the prior abuse of the cleric, the age of the cleric at onset of abuse, and marriage (Piquero et al., 2008). Marriage was found to increase the likelihood of police investigation, which is an interesting outcome given that so few Catholic clergy are married (Doyle et al., 2006). This study is one of the few, however which consider CSA by Catholic clergy as white-collar crime (Piquero et al., 2008).

### Reports to religious institution

The central complaint about CSA within Christian institutions has not been that the sexual violence occurs but that, when reported, it has frequently been mismanaged, adding to the harm experienced by the survivors of abuse. Participants who identified that they had made a report

to a Christian institution were asked a series of questions about their satisfaction with the outcomes they sought and received (Figure 25).

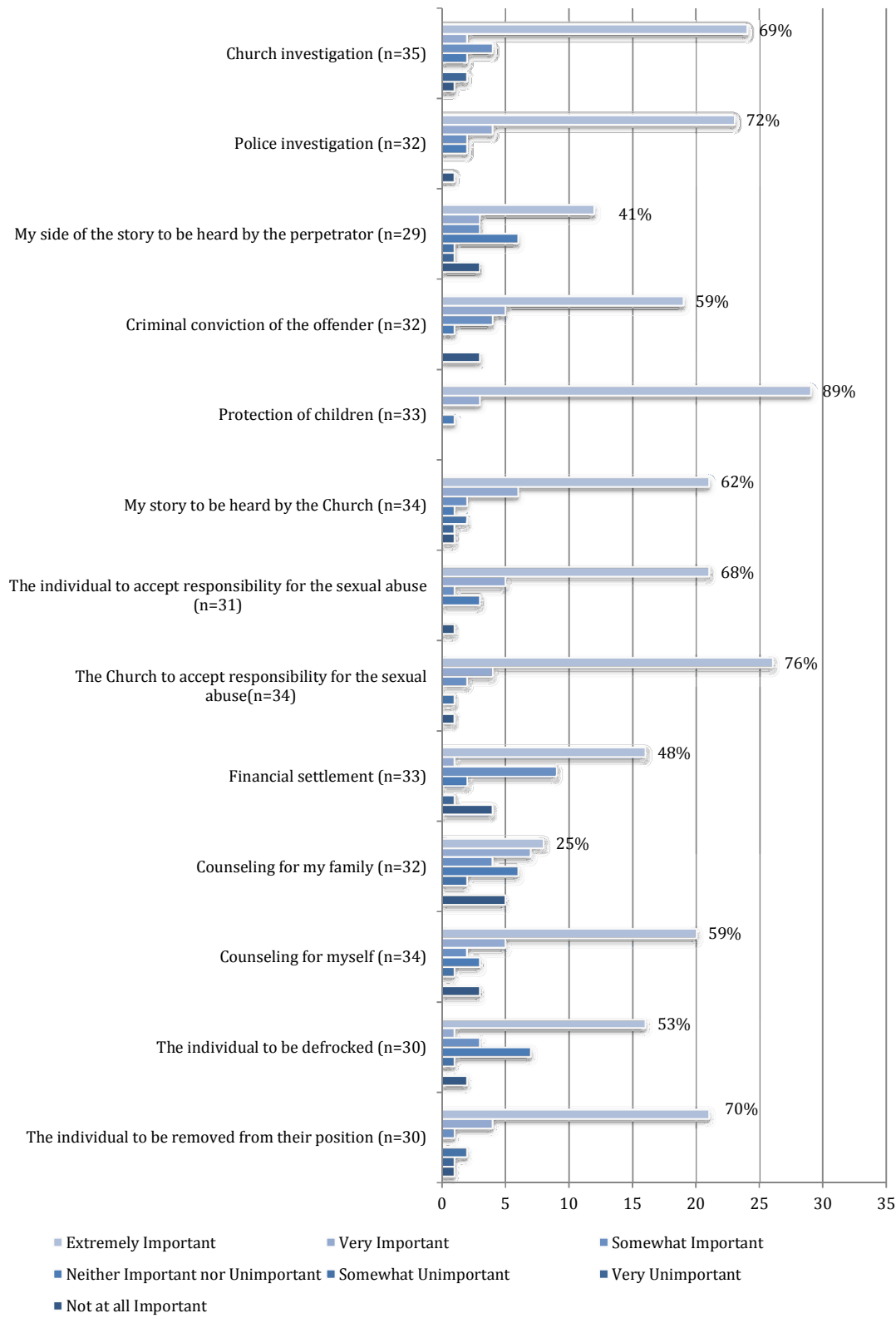


Figure 25: Reason for official report

For 88% (29) of the participants that answered the question (n=33), the protection of children was extremely important. Other factors that were heavily rated as extremely important include the Church accepting responsibility (76%, n=34), a Police investigation (72%, n=32), a Church investigation (69%, n=35) and the individual to be removed from their position (70%, n=30). It is interesting to note that the provision of services such as counselling and financial settlement provided the most diverse ranking of responses amongst participants, although individual counselling was valued as extremely important by 59% (n=34) of participants who answered the question. One participant wrote the following comment:

Initiated legal action to force the church take action found out the church valued only its money so in the end that's what we went for very unsatisfactory and the process forced on me was the third level of abuse first the actual second the denial and third no longer able to deny dragging out the legal process more than three years

This comment is consistent with the work of Balboni (2011) who demonstrates in her study that those survivors who litigate to seek financial settlement usually do so as a last resort.

Balboni (2011) provides the most detailed study of survivor motives in seeking redress from the Christian institutions. Balboni (2011) also focuses on survivors of CSA from Catholic institutions and situates her study in the pursuit of civil action against Catholic institutions. Balboni's (2011) research recognises that survivors often take civil action as a last resort when they feel dissatisfied with or ignored by responses from the Catholic Church. Survivors reported that financial settlements from civil action was often of symbolic value but was unsatisfactory nonetheless, and that civil proceedings were traumatic and drawn out by unnecessary defensiveness from Catholic Church response to litigation (Balboni, 2011). Civil action in Australia has not reached the same levels as litigation in the USA.

### Outcomes

Where there had been multiple outcomes as a result of their complaint or where they had made complaints to more than one organisation, participants were able to identify this when asked about outcomes (n=35) (Figure 26). Twenty-six percent (26%, 9) of participants identified that there had been an investigation by the relevant Christian institutional body. Another 26% reported that the person who abused them was deceased, with one participant identifying that the perpetrator had committed suicide. Given the low numbers of defrockings that are generally associated with allegations of CSA, it is encouraging to see that, in this study, 14% (5) of participants reported knowledge of perpetrator defrocking. Fourteen percent (5) reported that the perpetrator was removed from duties through retirement and similarly 14% (5) reported that the perpetrator had been removed from duties but had an unchanged status. Unchanged status included keeping the title of 'priest' and/or religious authority. The instances of perpetrators being moved from one position to another was limited, with only seven (20%) of participants reporting that this had occurred. Given the small numbers of participants that chose to answer this question, this number is still substantial. In the category of 'other', participants nominated providing further information about the current status of their case in court, investigations by Police that had not proceeded, and the following comments:

He is still to my knowledge protected by church groups & last I heard abusing disabled children in church bus. A sibling took him to trial however he got to plead on the 11th hr [sic] to one lesser charge & suspended sentence with name suppression which is extremely upsetting for me. My own abuse has never been taken seriously by anyone outside of a counsellor I had for a couple of years.

He moved to USA.

Nothing happened when towards healing investigated. Told me to report it to police myself.

He no longer runs parenting courses etc. in his new church, his new church found out about his history of SA.

The Church left him in contact with children he suicided when implicated in abuse in Tasmania just prior to appearing in court went to church in 1992 the person spoken to was friend of the abusers and threatened legal action if I spoke out 'we can afford the very best lawyers'.

The comments of participants are interesting when compared to studies such as the Anglican Church study (Parkinson et al., 2012). Parkinson et al. (2012:34) suggested that 19% of reported cases ended in dismissal or license removal for the individual against whom the Church substantiated allegations of abuse. The report goes on to state that complainants were offered counselling in 52% of cases and other forms of compensation in 36% (Parkinson et al., 2012). Participants in the current study were not only asked about outcomes of their complaints but also their level of satisfaction with such outcomes. Levels of satisfaction will be briefly examined.

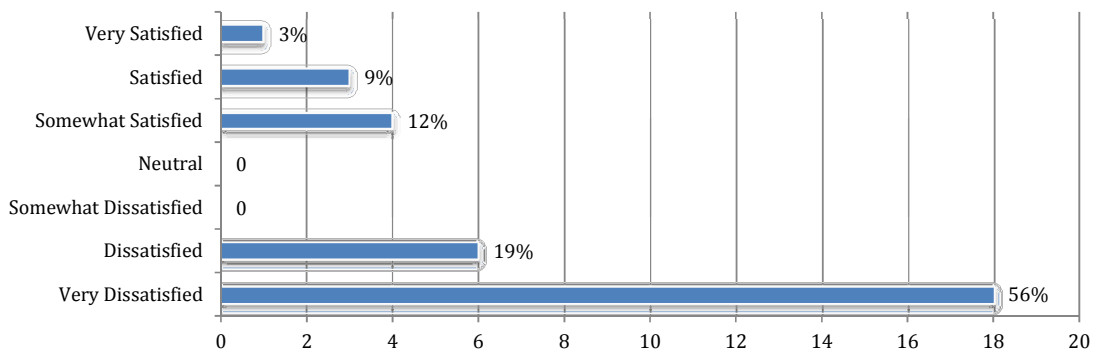


Figure 26: Outcome of complaint (n= 35)

Satisfaction with assistance offered

Fifty-two percent (16) of participants report that they were 'very dissatisfied' with the assistance offered by the Christian institution to whom they reported the abuse (n=31), with a further 19% (6) reporting that they were 'dissatisfied'. In total 29% (9) of participants rated their satisfaction with the assistance offered as 'very satisfied', 'satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' (Figure 27). Given the limitations of the method, it is impossible to gauge whether this level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction is characteristic of child abuse in Christian institutions.

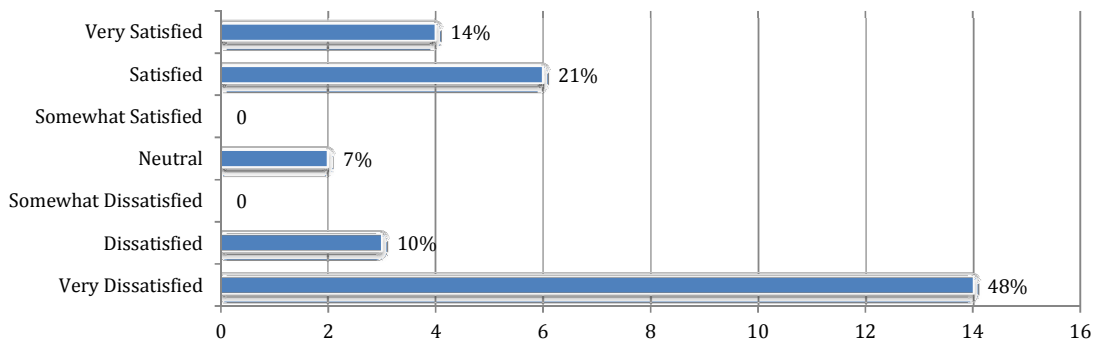
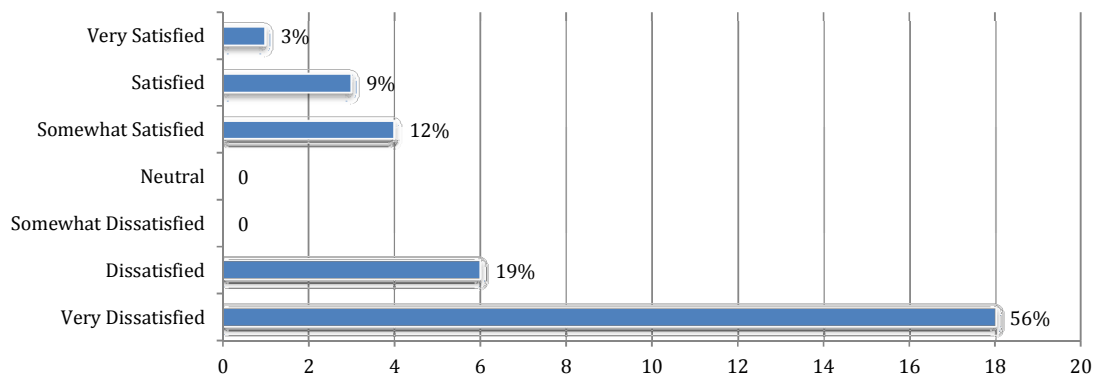


Figure 27: Level of satisfaction with assistance offered (n=31)

### Satisfaction with organisational truthfulness

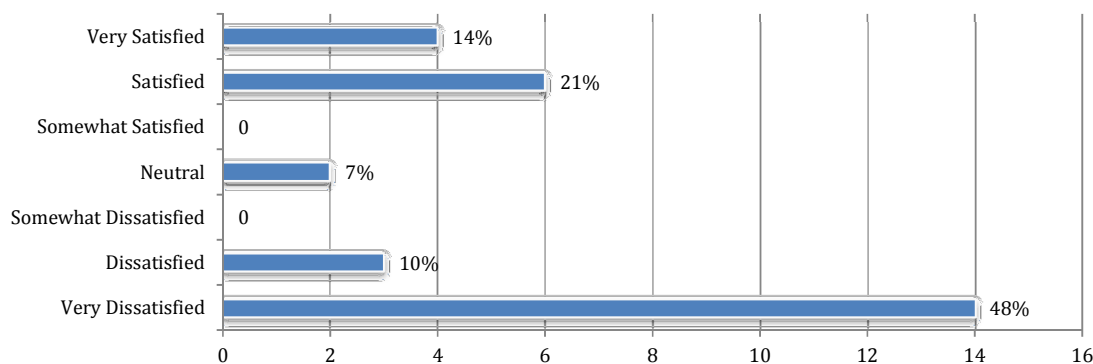
Fifty-six percent (18) of participants rated their satisfaction with the 'truthfulness of the organisation's response to their complaint' as 'very dissatisfied' (n=32). Again, 19% (6) rated organisational truthfulness as 'dissatisfied'. In total, 28% (9) of participants rated their satisfaction with the truthfulness of the organisation as 'very satisfied', 'satisfied' or 'somewhat satisfied' (Figure 28).



**Figure 28: Level of satisfaction with truthfulness of organisation's response to complaint (n=32)**

### Satisfaction with counselling offered

Fifty-seven percent (20) of participants who reported on the assistance they sought from the Christian institution where they reported the abuse (n=29) received counselling as a result of their report (Figure 29). In total, 34% (10) of participants reported that they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the counselling offered and 59% (7) were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the counselling offered.



**Figure 29: Level of satisfaction with counselling offered by organisation (n=29)**

The above data demonstrate that not all participants were dissatisfied with the outcomes of their complaints of abuse. Whilst this is encouraging, it should be noted that, where participants were dissatisfied, they were likely to be so to the highest levels. A high level of survivor dissatisfaction with responses by Christian institutions is not unique to this study. Indeed, much criticism has been made of Christian institutions for their failures in addressing the needs and desires of survivors of CSA by PICIs (Balboni, 2011; Berry and Renner, 2004; Cullingford, 2010). It is the pursuit of justice in the face of Christian institutions with enormous resources and limited willingness to openly address the issue of CSA by PICIs that continues to drive the need for enquiries such as the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) currently active in Australia.

## **8. Discussion and recommendations**

This research of Australian survivors' perspectives of CSA by PICIs indicates there is much scope for a more comprehensive study of the experiences of Australian survivors of sexual abuse, including offences against adults, within Christian institutions. What is evident from this study is that those Christian Institutions that are highly hierarchical and encourage a strong culture of clericalism have the highest reported numbers of child sexual abuse. This is supported by international research. It is often not the occurrence of abuse but the responses of such institutions that causes the greatest offence. This research found that Institutional responses have the potential to be profoundly damaging and revictimising for survivors of abuse.

### **Recommendation 1:**

Further research should additionally investigate institutional structures that available evidence suggests facilitate the perpetration of CSA by PICIs in Australia. Comparison to those that impede and reduce such occurrences would be beneficial. Such research will assist in informing policy development both within and external to Christian institutions.

### **Recommendation 2:**

Those Christian Institutions with a significant history of mismanagement of CSA, such as the Catholic Church, should commit to engaging more meaningfully with external services providers in the overseeing of complaints processes and to developing more accountable governance structures.

Steps towards a more comprehensive picture of institutional responses to CSA by PICIs are being made by the establishment of the current Royal Commission. Similarly the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry represents state-based steps towards recognising the occurrence of CSA within religious institutions, consequences of such abuse for survivors, survivors' families, communities and the organisations responsible for responding to and managing CSA within religious institutions. These inquiries will not go far enough if they do not consider how survivors have managed their experiences of abuse and what resources they found helpful to do so.

### **Recommendation 3:**

That the current Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse encourage survivors not only to tell their story but also to report on what they have found helpful in addressing the trauma caused by CSA. This will provide invaluable information to inform further policy and service delivery.

This work demonstrates that there are similarities in the occurrence of CSA in Christian institutions in Australian and international counterparts. In these data, and in international studies, male victims of CSA by PICIs are more likely to experience ephebophilic abuse; that is, a pubescent or post pubescent onset of abuse (Perillo et al., 2008). In contrast, CSA by PICIs perpetrated against females is likely to fit within definitions of paedophilic abuse at its onset. In this study, with almost equal representation, the balance of male and female participants was much closer to that reported elsewhere (Terry et al., 2011). As other studies have demonstrated, the occurrence of CSA in Christian institutions is diverse and the stories of survivors reflect this (Howard, 2012; Barnardos et al., 2010; O'Callahan and Briggs, 2003; Department of Justice and Equality, 2010). This study further confirms the findings of other studies and inquiries which have shown that instances of CSA by PICIs are at times only minor; however, they also often involve direct contact genital fondling and penetrative offences (Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, 2009; Parkinson et al., 2009; Terry, 2008). The occurrence of CSA by PICIs is often sustained over significant periods of time and involves grooming strategies, some of which are common to the perpetration of CSA elsewhere and

others that are unique to their institutional and spiritual context (Benkert and Doyle, 2009a; Howard, 2012).

**Recommendation 4:**

Further research should examine the interaction between vulnerabilities in childhood and perpetrator grooming strategies. It is evident from this research that this is an area that requires greater attention in order to understand the specific dynamics of CSA as perpetrated by PICIs and to help protect vulnerable children.

Disclosure presented as a difficult process for participants in this survey. Where participants felt they were not believed was more likely to be where disclosure of CSA was made to family members and to personnel within Christian institutions. Surprisingly, in contrast, reports to Police often resulted in outcomes from criminal justice processes. These data present as very different to outcomes from complaints of CSA made within the broader community (Daly and Bouhours, 2010; Maguire, 2009). Finally, in common with international studies, this report demonstrates that responses to reports of CSA made to Christian institutions often result in outcomes that are unsatisfactory to survivors (Keenan, 2012). Although not all survivors felt dissatisfied with the outcomes and processes of reporting and investigating complaints, where they did feel dissatisfied, they were likely to feel extremely dissatisfied.

**Recommendation 5:**

**5.1** In order to prevent CSA and better manage disclosure, Christian institutions engage (if they have not already done so) in affirmed best-practice child protection education at every level of their organisation. This should include programs targeted at employees, volunteers, communities and families within the Institution.

**5.2** Those Christian Institutions that have developed comprehensive child protection programs should participate in a regular external review.

**5.3** Further research is needed into meaningful alternatives to both criminal justice responses and Church responses. Such research should include a consideration of potential restorative and therapeutic justice models.

This study makes an important contribution to understanding survivors' perspectives of CSA by PICIs in Australia. Insofar as it directly considers data provided by participants of a quantitative survey and, for results reported here, also in a limited qualitative capacity, it provides valuable insight into the context and occurrence of CSA by PICIs. This study clearly indicates, moreover, that further research would prove beneficial to informing a consistently positive and just response to complaints of CSA within Christian institutions. This is an important process that is increasingly recognised by Governments across the world. A consistently positive and just response has long been recognised as an essential goal by survivors, their families and the communities in which they live.

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## Notes

### *Study Limitations:*

The sensitive nature of the study and the fact that most victims of sexual assault do not report being abused means that the sample population frame is not known. Given this problem of invisibility, the survey has relied on a purposive sampling frame. Consequently the survey responses cannot be generalised to a wider and unknown population of child sexual abuse survivors of Christian institutional abuse.

The study was further limited by being accessible only to those participants that were able to connect to a stable and sufficiently private internet source. Some survivors in the community contacted the author to say that they were supportive of the project but this type of internet access was beyond their capacity. The uses and limitations of online surveying as a methodological choice are the subject of ongoing debate (Lefever et al., 2007) (Heiervang and Goodman, 2011; Ramo et al., 2011).

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