

organisation in Australia receives approximately three to four reports of allegations of child sexual abuse each month.

6.3 External reporting of child sexual abuse to authorities

Although the position is not clear in relation to a few files, there is otherwise no evidence before the Royal Commission of the Jehovah's Witness organisation having reported to police or other secular authority a single one of the 1,006 alleged perpetrators of child sexual abuse recorded in the case files held by Watchtower Australia.⁵⁴⁵

No witness appearing on behalf of the Jehovah's Witness organisation could identify an instance of the organisation reporting an allegation of child sexual abuse to the police or other authorities.⁵⁴⁶ Mr Spinks said that 'we are not going to at any point suggest that we have telephoned the authorities or have instructed elders to do that'.⁵⁴⁷

A letter in evidence before the Royal Commission shows that Watchtower Australia's own review of the 1,006 case files established that '383 alleged perpetrators had been dealt with by either police or secular authorities in the respective States or Territories in which they reside'.⁵⁴⁸ That letter did not describe or otherwise suggest that the Jehovah's Witness organisation had an active role in bringing allegations against the 383 identified perpetrators to the attention of secular authorities. Furthermore, Mr Toole did not dispute that Watchtower Australia's review of the case files may have yielded some false positive results. That is, it is possible that some of the 383 identified case files may have contained reference to but not had the involvement of the authorities.⁵⁴⁹

Similarly, the case files record that 161 of the alleged perpetrators recorded in the files had been convicted of a child sexual abuse offence.⁵⁵⁰ It is not possible to conclude on the basis of this data that any of those convictions came about because of reports to the authorities by the Jehovah's Witness organisation. What this data does suggest is that, although the Jehovah's Witness organisation did not report allegations against those 161 offenders to the authorities, the offenders had nonetheless come to the attention of police.

There is no evidence before the Royal Commission that the Jehovah's Witness organisation either had or did not have a role or any involvement in bringing to the attention of secular authorities any complaint of child sexual abuse that was investigated by secular authorities.⁵⁵¹