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Jehovah's Witnesses to face abuse inquiry

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Two senior members of the Jehovah's Witnesses in Australia will face a royal commission that found the organisation does not adequately protect children from being sexually abused.

The Jehovah's Witnesses maintain they act on any allegation of child sex abuse, despite the child abuse royal commission finding they have not reported a single one of 1006 alleged perpetrators to police.

Its November 2016 report said the organisation wrongly relies on a two-witness rule with 2000-year-old biblical origins when handling complaints.

The commission will on Friday again hear from Jehovah's Witness Australian branch committee member Terrence O'Brien and Rodney Spinks, who advises church elders on how to handle child sex abuse cases.

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A separate public hearing, also in Sydney, will focus on the Uniting Church in Australia.

Its president Stuart McMillan, who will give evidence on Friday, said many people across the church, its agencies and affiliated schools have worked to address the many issues raised by the royal commission.

On Friday it will have to explain what it has learned and reflect on how much it has left to do to ensure the church and its institutions are the safest places they can be for all children in its care, Mr McMillan said.

'Be under no illusion - this is not someone else's problem,' Mr McMillan said in a pastoral letter ahead of the hearing.

'Child sexual abuse is an insidious crime to which the royal commission has proved that faith-based institutions are particularly vulnerable.'

AAP

Picture via Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse website

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