

By Andrew Morrison RFD SC

The scale and variety of sexual assault and sexual abuse cases discussed in this issue is a comment both on the strong sex drive of the human species and the inability or unwillingness of many to control it. The range covered in this edition is remarkable. Whether it is the Fairbridge Farm School abuse of young migrant children (Anthony Cheshire's case note) or the often forgotten abuse of older people in residential care (Sharon Wall's article) or sexual misconduct by doctors (Tina Cockburn and Bill Madden's article) or abuse in the schools or institutions over many decades, there can be little doubt that the problem is widespread in our society.

Sadly, the widespread scandals affecting the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, the United States, the United Kingdom and European countries generally (and Belgium, in particular) does not suggest that the problem is going away. Nor, as the material in this edition shows, is the issue confined to the Roman Catholic Church, although that Church's response is particularly unhelpful because of the strong inclination to keep the problem (and the abusers) within the Church and not disclose the abuse to the civil authorities or, indeed, even to the potential victims.

It is to be hoped that those engaged in litigation involving these issues obtain helpful insights from the material discussed in this edition. ■

Dr Andrew Morrison RFD SC is a barrister at 16 Wardell Chambers, Sydney.



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Editor and Production Manager Renée Harris renee@lawyersalliance.com.au Phone: (02) 9258 7721

Design Tianli Zu tian@artstudiozz.com.au

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 Email: enquiries@lawyersalliance.com.au Website: <http://www.lawyersalliance.com.au>

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