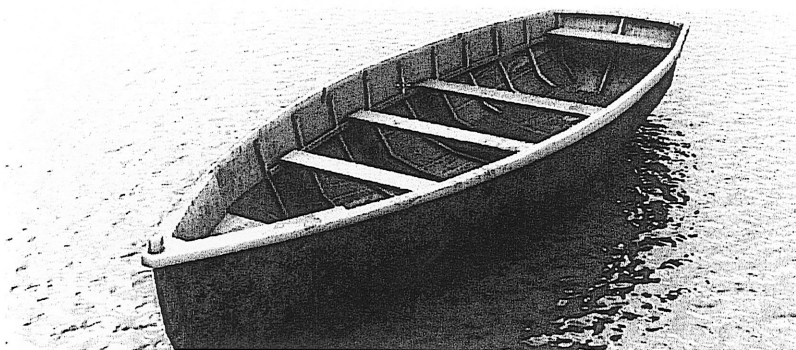


Introducing *Lifeboat Geelong* Bringing Hope, Help and Recognition



Lifeboat Geelong was established in Geelong in December 2013 and has met consistently every month since. It seeks to provide effective pastoral support to established victims of church-related sexual abuse by addressing a number of areas of need, including, but by no means restricted to, some financial support for those many victims / survivors who are genuinely struggling to make ends meet.

Difficulty with good financial management is one of many consequences of Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a condition that is very common among victims of sexual abuse, and is often accompanied by an inability to manage finances well. However,

Lifeboat Geelong's chief purpose is to bring to people harmed by church-related sexual abuse a sense of respect, understanding and compassion, along with efforts to address important issues in a practical way such as finding employment and suitable accommodation.

The stories of victims have tragic similarities: their education has been compromised in a major way, employment is difficult, relationship breakdowns are common far beyond the norm, they have to deal with personal isolation and lack of self-worth, as well as the all too common PTSD, which brings an inability to manage personal health and finance, and generally life itself.

The *Lifeboat Geelong* Committee consists of around 25 people and a number of these have very relevant qualifications, including a highly-experienced trauma psychologist, a general practitioner, a highly-experienced retired senior police officer, a lawyer, a senior officer from CASA (Centre Against Sexual Assault), and a former member of Parliament / barrister. It also includes others who are extremely disappointed that the churches (and the Catholic Church in particular) has not done enough for people who truly deserve genuine support, assistance and recognition. They wanted to help – and are doing so.

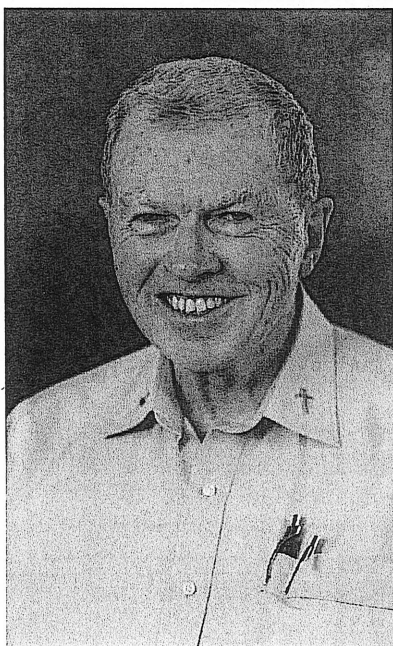
Over the past three years, using freely-offered generous donations from over 250 contributors, *Lifeboat Geelong* has distributed around \$150,000 to support 60 established victims in Geelong (about 20), Melbourne, regional Victoria and interstate. This assistance includes rent arrears, car expenses, health insurance, legal aid, urgent utilities bills, and household repairs. The payments have helped to alleviate immediate financial stress. But the sense of respect and care experienced by the recipients as a result of this support is what has been the greatest help to them – because it is based on respect and recognition.

In addition to direct financial support, *Lifeboat Geelong* has helped with individual counselling, assisting with advice regarding car repairs or purchasing, transport to medical appointments, provision of accommodation, referral to other areas of support, personal support for those attending the Royal Commission, and help to victims / survivors to support each other.

This group has named itself “Lifeboat” because it believes that effective and compassionate pastoral care can be the “lifeboat” that “went down with the ship” when trusted church people abused that trust and damaged our “clients” in such a terrible way.

Lifeboat Geelong is now a registered company limited by guarantee, with four directors – Fr Kevin Dillon AM (Chair), Mr David O’Brien (barrister), Mrs Elizabeth Riordan (Company Secretary) and Mr Terry O’Brien (retired counsellor).

Fr Kevin Dillon AM



“As far as talking with victims of abuse, I never considered myself a counsellor. Hopefully I’m a supportive person from within the organisation that offended them so terribly, someone to reach out to. They often suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress and they’ll ring to say hello. I’m in touch with about 130 victims to date. They don’t contact me for money or hand-outs. What they seek is recognition of the harm done them, and I believe, if that is not given it can turn to bitterness. With Lifeboat we’ve been able to harness an enormous amount of good service and good will from Geelong. Lifeboat’s work reaches out to people from all over Australia.”

From the “Human in Geelong”, May 2017

<https://humansingeelong.com/2017/05/26/fr-kevin-dillon-lifeboat-geelong/>

VISION STATEMENT

A just, compassionate and understanding society.

MISSION STATEMENT

To bring help and hope to adult survivors of Church-related sexual abuse.

OBJECTIVES

The *Lifeboat* program aims to achieve its mission goal by providing assistance in the following ways:

- Offering support and practical help using volunteers.
- Making referrals to appropriate professionals.
- Advocating on behalf of adult survivors of church related sexual abuse

Your donation will support *Lifeboat Geelong's* valuable work

With your support, *Lifeboat Geelong* can provide much needed assistance to those whose lives have been damaged by abuse.

Lifeboat Geelong has been endorsed by the Taxation Department as a Deductible Gift Recipient. Therefore gifts of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible. You can donate on line here:

<https://www.lifeboatgeelong.com.au/donate/>

Would you like to support the clients of Lifeboat Geelong with your care, time and/or skills? Please contact us to discuss how you can best do so.

Lifeboat Geelong Foundation

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23 July 2017