

## **Statement from the Scottish Satyananda Yoga Network in response to the Australian Royal Commission Public Hearing.**

The Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is conducting public hearings into allegations of serious sexual and physical abuse in the 1970s and 1980s carried out at (Satyananda Yoga) Mangrove Mountain Ashram by its then spiritual leader. He later served a prison sentence and died in 1997.

The celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Mangrove Mountain in 2014 drew the attention and anger of victims, whose accounts of their experiences had not been heard. Shortly afterwards some of the victims approached the Royal Commission, prompting the current hearings. The main hearing was in December 2014 and it has now been adjourned until March 2015 pending further information from India. In addition to hearing from victims, the enquiry will look at how the organisation has responded to the events, over the years and up to the present day.

We are shocked and greatly distressed by these serious allegations of historical child abuse at the ashram, both sexual and physical. Our hearts go out to the victims. We condemn all such abuse without reservation. We welcome the opportunity that the Royal Commission is giving to victims/survivors of this abuse to have recognition of their suffering; and hope that this will begin their healing process. We do not wish to say more until the Royal Commission completes its work and publishes its findings.

In the meantime we will continue to practice and teach yoga in the sincere belief that its timeless practices remain of great value and that they are and should be independent of human frailty and wrong-doing. We will also continue to monitor the progress of the hearings. Any of our yoga students who wish to discuss these matters are welcome to contact us individually.

Hari OM

28 January 2015