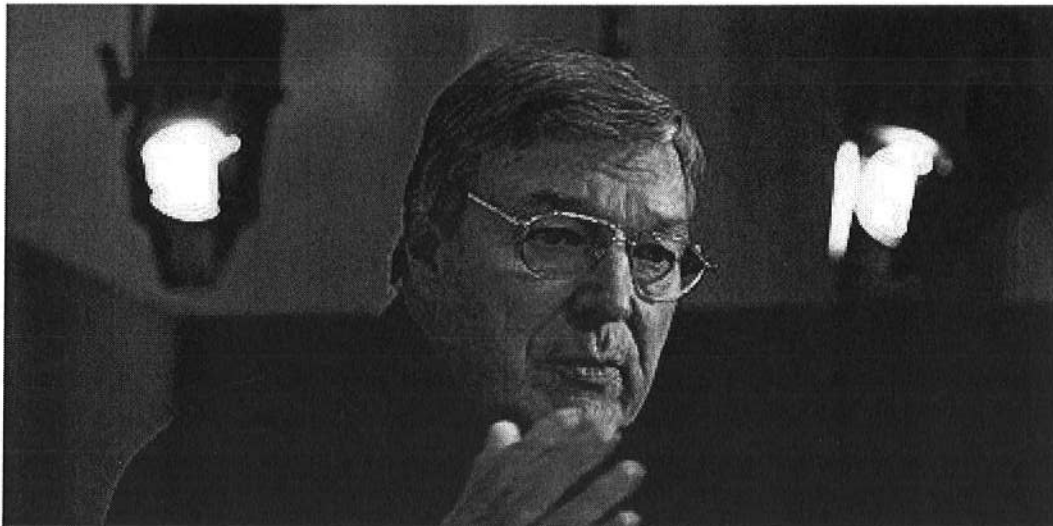


## The Border Mail (1)

# Pell urged to quit over abuse cover-up claims

By Josephine Tovey  
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A NSW government MP has called on Cardinal George Pell to resign over his "failure" to properly respond to child sex abuse in the Catholic Church and the institution's alleged cover-up of numerous crimes.

The Nationals MP for Dubbo, Troy Grant, a former police officer who led the watershed paedophilia investigation of priest Vincent Ryan, said it was time for Cardinal Pell, as Archbishop of Sydney, to "fall on his sword" because the church had never managed to put the interests of victims before its clergymen.

Mr Grant's call comes after a senior police officer, Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox, wrote an impassioned letter to the Premier, Barry O'Farrell, urging him to set up a royal commission into the matter.

Mr Grant said the leadership of the church had shown an inability to deal with the issue.

"If Pell hasn't got the capacity or courage to tackle this front-on then he should step aside and let somebody in there that does," Mr Grant told Fairfax Media on Friday.

"If he's not prepared to do that he should get out of the road and let someone who is for the betterment of the church take his place."

Mr O'Farrell has repeatedly resisted calls for a royal commission in NSW, arguing it threatened to jeopardise police investigations.

Mr Grant said the issue would be better dealt with by a national royal commission, as it was not confined to a single state.

"None of the states own this issue, [the church] shifts priests across the country, across the world . . . I think it would be less successful – a state-led inquiry – than a national one," he said.

"If we're going to do this we need to do it properly, and the individual resources that a state has are much less than a national effort could be."

Mr Grant said the Catholic church was his family's church, which made the issue a personal one for him.

"This is a blight on the faith and an institution that does so much good," he said.

"We must put the victims' welfare and interests first, and that's what the church has never done."

In his letter to the Premier, which was also [published in \*The Newcastle Herald\*](http://www.theherald.com.au/story/757111/opinion-dont-block-your-ears-to-abuse-mr-premier/?cs=308) (<http://www.theherald.com.au/story/757111/opinion-dont-block-your-ears-to-abuse-mr-premier/?cs=308>), Inspector Fox said police were continually frustrated by the "sinister" behaviour of the church.

"I can testify from my own experience that the church covers up, silences victims, hinders police investigations, alerts offenders, destroys evidence and moves priests to protect the good name of the church," he wrote.

"Convicted priest Vincent Ryan was sent to Victoria when the church learnt of his abuse, returning the following year after things cooled down to pick up where he left off.

"Many priests don't want a royal commission nor does the hierarchy of the church, but God knows we need one."

A response is being sought from Cardinal Pell.