

### **Media Release: IGFF Responds to Horrific Reports of Abuse in Swimming**

The tragic accounts of abuse reported by ABC's 7.30 are a sobering reminder that the horrific actions of the past, still cause immeasurable damage and suffering in the present.

I pay my deepest tribute to Shane Lewis and Paul Shearer and my everlasting condolences to their families. I also acknowledge the incredible courage demonstrated by the Survivors in sharing their experience and reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that Survivors are seen, heard, and more importantly believed.

In telling their stories, these incredibly brave Survivors have shone a further light on the scourge of institutional sexual abuse and empower those affected in the community to come forward and seek justice.

Institutional abuse has, and will continue to thrive, wherever there is an inequity between power and consent.

It's important that we all recognise that no matter the strides we have made as a society in putting an end to institutional abuse- our work is far from done.

Every person has a role to play in calling out and reporting inappropriate behaviour when they see it.

As a community we must be diligent, vigilant, and fearless when it comes to protecting the vulnerable and to help ensure that no child falls prey to predators.

Especially when those predators are seeking to hide their heinous crimes in plain sight.

Sexual abuse has the potential to occur in any organisation and I don't think it can be more powerfully or accurately stated than in the words of Mr Lewis himself:

"it's not just swimming, not just sport...Abuse doesn't discriminate between demographics. There are too many people out there who have and are still suffering." – Shane Lewis

**Clare Leaney**

**CEO**

**In Good Faith Foundation**

*Clare Leaney is CEO of In Good Faith Foundation, a national charity and support service providing advocacy services to individuals, families and communities impacted by institutional abuse for over twenty years.*

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