

# The West Australian

WA News Courts & Justice Crime

## Roy Wenlock: Anglican Church denies liability for serial paedophile's abuse at the WACA



**Tim Clarke** The West Australian  
Thu, 20 June 2024 4:30PM

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The Anglican Church claims it bears no legal or financial responsibility for alleged sexual abuse meted out by serial paedophile Roy Wenlock during his time working at the WACA – despite them seemingly knowing he was targeting boys in his care at the cricket. Credit: Steve Ferrier/The West Australian



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Wenlock was a serial abuser of young boys, whose crimes were exposed during a Government inquiry into historical child sex abuse at Anglican hostels in 2012 – five years after his death.

Supreme Court Justice Peter Blaxell found Wenlock had routinely abused teenage boys in his care during his 14-year reign at St Christopher’s House during the 1960s and 70s.

He concluded Wenlock concocted bogus “wrestling” sessions with the boys requiring them to strip down to their underwear before engaging in what became known by his victims as “bruting” – where he would lie on his back then make the boy straddle him before pretending to buck them off.

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## **THE NIGHTLY**

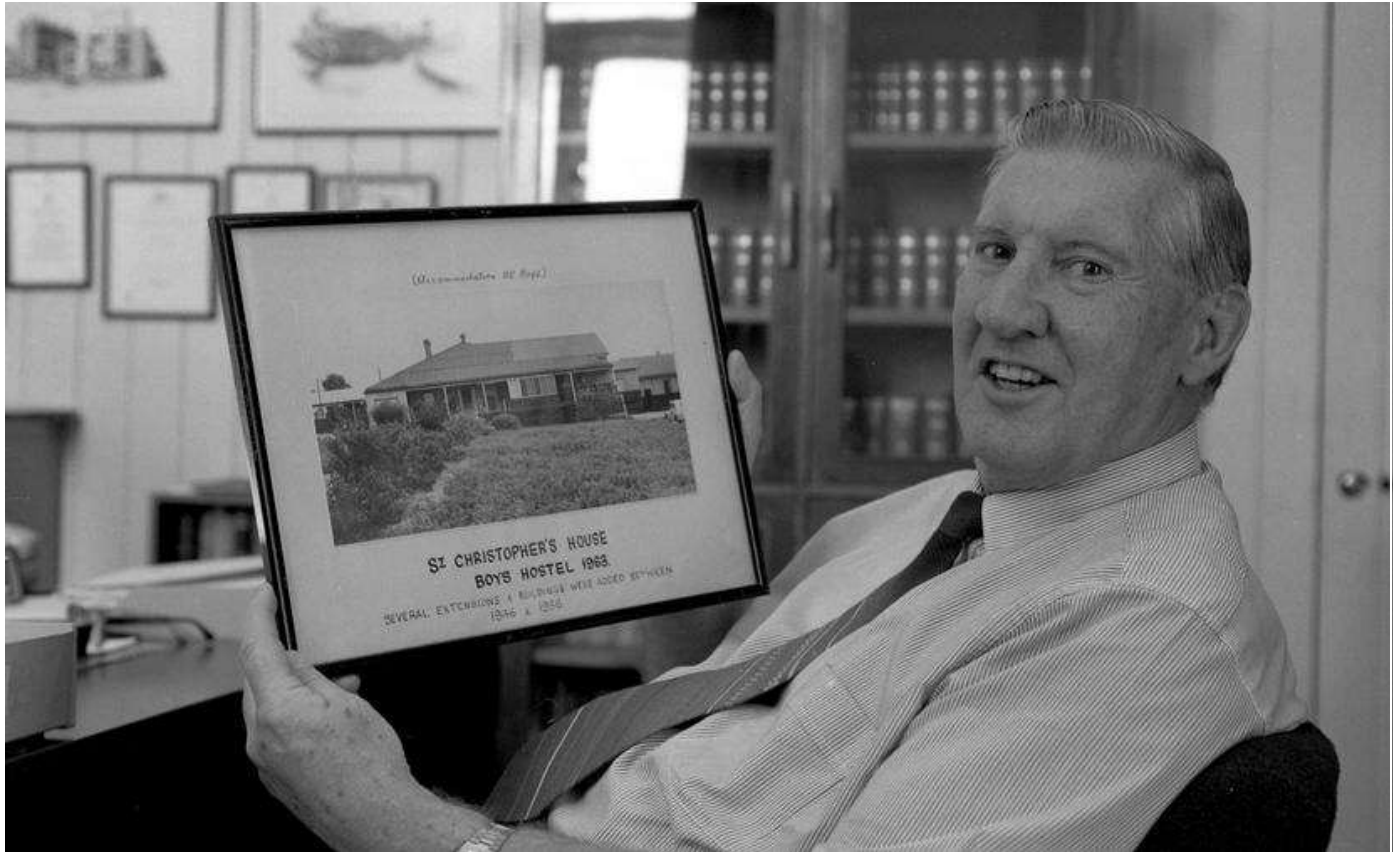
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In some cases, Wenlock made boys carry out sexual acts on him and on at least one occasion allowed a priest to watch a “wrestling” session.



📷 Roy Wenlock with the pic of St Christopher's house boys hostel where he was warden. Credit: Tony Ashby/WA News

Wenlock eventually resigned from the Northam-based hostel in 1977 after complaints were made however he was never subject to criminal charges.

After he left Northam, he became the Rector's warden at the Floreat Parish then soon took up the role of development officer at the WACA in 1979.

Now, two survivors of Wenlock's abuse – which allegedly occurred against them in the early 90's – are suing both the Western Australian Cricket Association and the Anglican Church for compensation and damages for the harm caused to them.

Their statement of claim argues the Anglican Church should also be liable for part of that damage, because they should have warned the WACA about Wenlock when they knew he was working there.

But in WA's District Court on Thursday, lawyers for the Church said the claim against

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That argument was made despite Justice Blaxell concluding that then Bishop Michael Challen clearly knew Wenlock was abusing boys, but asked him to resign, instead of sacking him.

What the church knew was also not passed onto the police at the time.

It was also revealed in court that in 1990, another victim approached the church to tell them he had been abused after meeting Wenlock through his association with the WACA.

It will be alleged the church again did not pass on any warning.

And during a visit to the WACA himself, Bishop Challen also recognised Wenlock's voice over the public address system, but again said nothing to the cricketing hierarchy about what the church knew.

Geoffrey Bourhill SC, representing the Church, said the proposed duty of care had been "created out of the ether" by the claimants.

"There is no basis on which it can be said (the Church) had any control over what happened to the plaintiffs," he said.

"They had no knowledge or conception of what he may do in the future."

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But John Gordon, barrister for both plaintiffs, said by what the church did and didn't do – didn't sack Wenlock, did not report him to police and did write a glowing reference to the Synod about him when he left – they enabled him to continue his abuse.

“Nothing was done ... and something needed to be done,” he said.

Judge Terry Palmer reserved a decision on whether to remove Anglican diocese from the legal actions.

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