A worldwide christian fellowship
represented in Australia, New Zealand,
North America, Canada, Argentina, Europe,
Scandinavia, United Kingdom and the Caribbean

Also known as The Exclusive Brethren,
Plymouth Brethren IV, or Brethren

Plymouth Brethren
Christian Church

Statement from the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church on Rosemary Stanton's interview on A Current Affair

The Plymouth Brethren Christian Church respects the many years work of Rosemary Stanton providing important information to Australians about nutrition and healthy living.

It saddens the Church that Rosemary has poor memories of her and her family's time in fellowship.

However, the Church respects her family's decision to take a different path in life and leave fellowship more than 50 years ago.

We bear neither Rosemary nor her family any ill-will.

Nevertheless, the Plymouth Brethren community feels it is important to correct a number of misconceptions that arose in last night's report on A Current Affair.

Many of the descriptions about life in the Church in the early 1960s do not equate with Church members' recollections from that time nor of life in fellowship in 2016.

These are set out in the table below:

Description	Reality
Rosemary said: "we were not allowed to look in a mirror".	There has never been a Church ban on mirrors in the homes or businesses of Church members. We are unaware of any ban ever existing.
Rosemary said: "you weren't supposed to go to concerts, you couldn't be in school plays".	Plymouth Brethren children regularly perform in school plays and musical concerts. In fact, the performance of live music at schools and in the family home is a central part of our lives. Further, Brethren children and adults perform concerts regularly in the community at aged care facilities and events assisting the homeless. These two videos demonstrate such: http://www.plymouthbrethrenchristianchurch.org/media/videos/rrt-choir-and-band-at-southern-cross/ http://www.plymouthbrethrenchristianchurch.org/media/videos/rrt-band-performs-at-parramatta-mission-during-lunch/

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Rosemary said: "I wasn't allowed to go to university".	When Rosemary left school in the early 1960s Brethren men and women attended university. Today, Brethren are encouraged to undertake post-school education, either via correspondence through platforms such as Open University or through registered training colleges. Students are actively encouraged to continue formal study after they complete secondary schooling.
A Current Affair reporter, Ben McCormack said the Brethren are a "secretive group who believe they are God's chosen people".	We do not hold ourselves as morally superior to our fellow men, women and children. We live and work harmoniously alongside them in the mainstream of society.
Rosemary said: "We weren't supposed to have anything to do with other people".	Members of the Plymouth Brethren engage widely with local communities. Many run successful businesses that employ thousands of non-Brethren Australians, interacting with thousands of non-Brethren customers and suppliers. The Church's charity, the Rapid Relief Team, is a volunteer, not-for- profit organisation, which supports local communities in times of need. Staffed by volunteers drawn from members of the PBCC, the RRT serves food and drinks to emergency services personnel, helps out at homeless missions and supports work for other charities. This video features Church members assisting emergency workers during the October 2013 Blue Mountains Bushfires: http://www.rapidreliefteam.org/gallery/videos/rrt-serves-at- faulconbridge-rfs-oct-2013/
Rosemary said: "We weren't supposed to read books".	Brethren children attend schools that follow the national curriculum and are actively encouraged to read set fiction and non-fiction texts.

Rosemary said: "We didn't have makeup".	Brethren women wear makeup if they so choose.
Brethren children don't watch movies.	Brethren children study film as part of their school education, as this video testifies: http://www.plymouthbrethrenchristianchurch.org/media/videos/value- of-education/
Rosemary said: "I had to have a ribbon around my hair. You had to have something to show that you accepted the headship of men. "These days I think they mostly wear a scarf … it's to show that you accept the headship of men."	This is a misunderstanding. Brethren women only wear scarves to attend Church meetings. They wear a bow in their hair for scriptural reasons. This has nothing to do with women being submissive to men. Women are not subservient to men in the church. While most fill a traditional role as home keeper, many play an active role in the running of family businesses and during Church meetings
A Current Affair reporter, Ben McCormack said: "Brethren members had to attend bizarre group confession sessions every week".	No such sessions have ever existed in the Church to the best knowledge of current members.

Rosemary said: "girls in that sect were not allowed to go to university".	All Brethren children, male and female, are encouraged to undertake post-school study.
A Current Affair reporter, Ben McCormack said: "But anyone who dares leave the Brethren pays a high price. They're no longer allowed any contact with family and friends".	This is misleading. While a person who chooses to leave fellowship will have less contact with family and friends who remain in the Church, there are many former members who maintain regular contact with family and friends in the Church.