



# Diocese of Wagga Wagga

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15 December 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **STATEMENT ON RELEASE OF FINAL REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION**

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has today released its final report, which includes a large number of recommendations, many of which will have a significant impact on the way the Catholic Church operates in Australia.

This report marks the end of the Royal Commission and the start of yet more work to make Church institutions as safe as possible for children and to deliver justice for survivors. We thank the Commissioners and their staff for the years of hard and harrowing work undertaken during this process.

Over recent years, the Diocese of Wagga Wagga has increased staffing and resources for child protection activities and has in place a dedicated Professional Standards and Safeguarding Office to conduct training and respond to complaints against people within our organisation.

We continue to have a strong focus on protections for children and vulnerable adults and we fully support the views contained in today's statement from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. (attached)

As a Church, we need to go through the report and come back to our community with a comprehensive, considered response - this is what we will do.

**\*\*ENDS\*\***



## **STATEMENT OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON RELEASE OF FINAL REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION**

**December 15 2017**

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has today released its final report, which includes a large number of recommendations, many of which will have a significant impact on the way the Catholic Church operates in Australia.

President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Denis Hart, said the release of the final report is the culmination of almost five years of intense examination of the way in which many different institutions, including the Catholic Church, have historically failed children.

“This is a shameful past, in which a prevailing culture of secrecy and self-protection led to unnecessary suffering for many victims and their families,” Archbishop Hart said.

“Once again I reiterate my unconditional apology for this suffering and a commitment to ensuring justice for those affected.”

Sister Ruth Durick OSU, president of Catholic Religious Australia, said religious orders across Australia are committed to continuing the work of recent years to ensure a future in which the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.

“We acknowledge with gratitude the courage of all those survivors who have come forward to the Royal Commission,” Sr Ruth said.

“We will be taking very seriously the Royal Commission's report and have commissioned an initial assessment of its findings by the Truth, Justice and Healing Council. We expect the TJHC assessment to be completed early in 2018.”

Both leaders said the Church will continue to push for the introduction of a national redress scheme for the survivors of child sexual abuse in which the Church will participate.

“The success of this scheme lies with the cooperation of the state governments. Without their involvement, national coverage will be impossible,” they said.

“It is now time for state governments to act.”

**Media Enquiries: Contact Shane Healy on 0417 928 588 (for Archbishop Hart)**



Catholic Archdiocese of  
Canberra and Goulburn

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## Pastoral Statement | 15 December 2017

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### **RESPONSE TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION** **DECEMBER 2017**

....Deliver us from evil...

The journey of the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sex Abuse has been a period of utter shame for the Catholic Church.

Revealed like never before, has been the diabolical criminality by some of our Church personnel toward the 'poor little ones' of God over the past 50 plus years.

We have heard from courageous victims who have carried throughout their lives the open wounds of unimaginable and unspeakable evil by people who have used their positions of moral power and authority for horrendous crimes.

These revelations are shocking, and engender immense humiliation in our communities.

We are truly sorry for all that has taken place.

The Royal Commission has been like an extended "Examination of Conscience" for us over 5 years. It has held a prophetic mirror before us in a sustained manner that has both produced shame and conversion.

This conversion of the heart is the beginning of a hope-filled path into the future. Conversion of cultural patterns and structures must follow.

We commit ourselves to examine carefully the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and build on what has already begun in the long future road to collective responsibility.

May the Lord "deliver us from evil" as we follow more closely His ways of mercy and justice.

**Archbishop Christopher Prowse**  
**Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn**  
**Friday, 15th December 2017**



Catholic Archdiocese of  
Canberra and Goulburn

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## Media Statement | 15 December 2017

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### **THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL CHILD SEX ABUSE**

I congratulate the Royal Commission on its rigor during this long investigative process, and honour the victims for their courage in exposing the unspeakable horrors they have endured.

These courageous victims have carried throughout their lives the open wounds of unimaginable and unspeakable evil. This has been done by people who have used their positions of moral power and authority for horrendous crimes.

We are truly sorry for all that has taken place.

This Royal Commission has been like an extended intense examination of conscience for Institutions, especially the Catholic Church. It lays bare our historic failings. It has held a prophetic mirror before us in a sustained manner that has both produced humiliation and conversion.

While reform has been underway, this report marks the line in the sand. Catholics and the community more broadly are calling loudly for strong leadership from Institutions and an unreserved approach to implementing reforms. As a Catholic leader, I accept this responsibility, and with the support of our faith-filled communities, I am determined to forge a more accountable and transparent future direction.

We can only right the wrongs through actions.

A thorough examination of the Royal Commission's report will now take place.

I support the introduction of a national redress scheme for the survivors of child sexual abuse in which the Church will participate, along with State governments. Over this year, I have strongly advocated the ACT Government to strengthen and expand the Reportable Conduct Scheme to include religious organisations.

**Archbishop Christopher Prowse**  
**Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn**  
**Friday, 15th December 2017**

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