



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday 9 August 2018

CREATING A SAFE CHURCH FROM WITHIN: DIOCESES TO HOST TWO DAYS WITH LEADING VATICAN EXPERT

The Catholic dioceses of Wollongong and Parramatta will be co-hosting two days of presentations by Fr Hans Zollner SJ—widely recognised as one of the leading experts in the field of safeguarding of minors and on areas concerning sexual abuse both in the Catholic Church and beyond.

The event—sponsored by various entities and supported by the NSW Ombudsman, Catholic Professional Standards Ltd and the NSW Professional Standards Office and hosted at *The Cube*, Campbelltown Catholic Club—will address the most significant issues facing the Catholic Church today with respect to harmful behaviour including the theological and spiritual implications arising from the abuse crisis and their impact on victims and survivors, together with members of the Church. Hans will explore why and how the Catholic Church needs to change to survive, flourish and ensure the safest place for the most vulnerable. Both days will feature audience participation and interactive workshops—Hans sees the voices of victims, survivors and the faithful at the heart of learning and education.

Hans, a German theologian and psychologist, has been a member of the pope's Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors since 2014 and is head of the Centre for Child Protection at the Pontifical Gregorian University (Gregorian) in Rome. Since 2003, he has taught at the Institute of Psychology at the Gregorian and has been the academic vice rector of the Gregorian since 2010. He has travelled to 50 countries on six continents—giving him an insight and a “feeling” for the worldwide Church.

When asked what attendees can expect to hear at one of his presentations, Hans said, “I would like to share my experience, observations and reflections on how the Church faces this scourge of abuse, and what is being done in terms of safeguarding.... I will [also] underline the ‘forgotten dimension’, the theological and spiritual implications of abuse.”

The event will be facilitated by Susan Pascoe—current president of the Australian Council for International Development. Prior to this role, Susan was the inaugural commissioner for the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

Day One, on **Friday 31 August 2018**, will be directed to Catholic Church personnel including child protection and safeguarding professionals, school principals, teaching staff, social welfare leaders and staff, clergy, religious, and other employees and volunteers.

Day Two, on **Saturday 1 September 2018**, will be directed to victims and survivors of abuse, their family, friends, and advocacy and support groups together with members from faith communities, particularly

parishioners. The proceeds from Day One registration costs will be utilised in a “pay-it-forward” scheme to ensure those on Day Two can attend free-of-charge (please note, those wishing to attend on Day Two will still need to register.)

Kate Temby will attend both days and prepare a public report which will focus on capturing the voice of attendees over the two days. Kate is currently working as a consultant in social policy and was a general manager at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse where she led the team that delivered investigations, public hearings, data analysis, research, policy and report writing in relation to the religious institutions examined by the Royal Commission. The report will be provided to the Australian Catholic Church’s Implementation Advisory Group for consideration.

Event coordinator and director of professional standards and safeguarding for the Diocese of Wollongong, Anna Tydd, said, “A key focus of the Royal Commission’s final report and recommendations was on the importance of ongoing and regular training and education for members of organisations who work with children. Endorsing the Diocese’s commitment to the Royal Commission’s *Child Safe Standard 1*—child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture—this event forms part of our comprehensive *Training and Education Program* for people in positions of leadership within the Diocese.

“We are so privileged to be able to get someone with the profile and experience of Hans to speak with us, so it would have been a shame not to have extended the invitation to the public for Day Two. We have been overwhelmed with hundreds of registrations for the event so far, but it’s still not too late to register.”

For more information and online registration, visit www.hanszollner.dow.org.au.

—ends—

For more information on Implementation Advisory Group, visit dow.sh/IAG.

Media contact: Daniel Hopper, Director of Media and Communications
4222 2461 | 0418 667 517 | daniel.hopper@dow.org.au