



MEDIA STATEMENT

CRA welcomes NSW Government's \$127 million commitment to Royal Commission Recommendations

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) welcomes the NSW Government's commitment to strengthening and broadening measures and protections to prevent child sexual abuse in NSW. Amongst those measures is the expansion of the coverage of the current reportable conduct scheme to include religious bodies and the transfer of the reportable conduct scheme from the NSW Ombudsman to the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.

The Catholic Church has long advocated for the expansion of oversight under the Reportable Conduct Scheme to include religious bodies. This has also been supported by other faith-based organisations and survivor advocate groups. This has been made clear in representations to Government and also at the inaugural joint Standing Committee, which met with the Government on 12 September 2018 at NSW Parliament House. The call for the expansion of oversight was recommended by the Royal Commission in its final report handed down in 2017.

CRA also supports the Government's decision to transfer the reportable conduct scheme from the NSW Ombudsman to the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian with the aim of integrating child safeguarding functions. CRA encourages the Government to consider whether further consolidation and integration of the safeguarding and oversight arrangements are required in NSW especially in relation to those arrangements focused on independently reviewing the systems for responding to vulnerable groups within the community.

"The Reportable Conduct Scheme has been a significant factor in developing change in the Church's response to allegations of child abuse," said Anne Walker, National Executive Director of CRA. "However, a properly integrated arrangement of oversight responsibility will assist organisations to focus on keeping the vulnerable safe. It will also assist in a more effective method of processing information to respond to risks to the vulnerable," she added.

Media Enquiries

Sylvia MacRitchie-Hook

E: comms@catholicreligious.org.au or M: 0410 644 356