



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

media release

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Response of the Archdiocese of Melbourne to the Report by the Hon. Donnell Ryan QC in relation to the Melbourne Response

In April 2014, Archbishop Denis Hart announced that he would revisit the compensation arrangements under the Melbourne Response with a view to either increasing or removing the then cap of \$75,000 and that the outcomes of this consultation would be shared with the Royal Commission.

On 25 August 2014, Archbishop Hart announced the appointment of retired Federal Court Judge, the Hon. Donnell Ryan QC to undertake the review. Archbishop Hart again confirmed that he would provide the Royal Commission with the results of the consultation which occurred when he provided his statement in December 2016 for Case Study 50.

Advertisements were published in the daily media on 6 November 2014 inviting submissions.

During his consultation, Mr. Ryan met with primary and secondary victims, other participants in the Melbourne Response process and representatives from a number of organisations. We express our thanks to Mr. Ryan and all those who participated in this consultation.

Mr. Ryan provided his report to Archbishop Hart on 25 September 2015 shortly after the Royal Commission released its report on redress and civil litigation and prior to the Archdiocese being the subject of Case Study 35 between November 2015 and April 2016.

The Archdiocese has considered the recommendations of Mr. Ryan while also having regard to the recommendations of the Royal Commission in its report on redress and civil litigation.

The Archdiocese has also been engaged throughout the second half of 2015 and 2016 up to the present with other Churches in discussions with the Victorian Government following its release on 5 August 2015 of a consultation paper on redress and civil litigation. The Archdiocese in conjunction with the Salvation Army (Southern Territory) and the Uniting Church in Australia (Synod of Victoria and Tasmania) jointly lodged a submission in October 2015 responding to the public consultation paper which proposed a redress scheme to be established under an Act of the Victorian Parliament. Since lodging this submission, there have been a number of meetings and discussions during 2015 and 2016 with senior Victorian government ministers and officials in an endeavour to progress the development of a redress scheme in Victoria.

The Catholic Church in Australia through the Truth Justice and Healing Council has strongly supported and advocated for the implementation of a national redress scheme to apply to all institutions engaged with children. At the recent hearing of the Royal Commission, Archbishop Hart publicly committed to joining this scheme if it is implemented. The Archdiocese is especially concerned with the delays in progressing the development of a national redress scheme and joins with the Truth Justice and Healing

Council as well as other institutions and survivor groups in urging the Commonwealth and all State and Territory governments to agree on the principles for such a scheme to allow its implementation without further undue delay.

In responding to the recommendations in the Ryan Review and the Royal Commission's report on redress and civil litigation, the Archdiocese has focused its attention in the following three areas:

1. Implementing the recommendation of Mr. Ryan to increase the cap on payments from the previous cap of \$75,000 to \$150,000 consistent with the cap for a national redress scheme announced by the Commonwealth government;
2. Survivors of child sexual abuse who have received financial redress under previous caps being able to access an additional payment that reflects the increased cap;
3. Ensuring the ongoing capacity of Carelink to care and support survivors of abuse through referrals to external health providers.

The Archdiocese is also currently engaged in implementing the new child safe standards based on the recommendations from *Betrayal of Trust* in all of the schools and parishes of the Archdiocese to ensure a child safe environment is maintained across the Archdiocese.

The priority of the Archdiocese is to ensure that children are kept safe and that survivors of abuse have access to a scheme that can investigate complaints, provide financial redress and ongoing access to counselling and psychological care services.

The Archdiocese has accepted a number of the recommendations made by Mr. Ryan and the Royal Commission. It has already implemented an increase in the cap to \$150,000 and has provided additional redress payments totaling more than \$5 million to over 90 applicants with applications still being received and processed. The Archdiocese encourages any survivor of child sexual abuse who has had a complaint accepted under the Melbourne Response and who has not already applied to lodge an application for an additional redress payment. Application forms and further information are available at <http://www.cam.org.au/Professional-Standards/Statements.aspx>

The Archdiocese intends to await further advice from the Commonwealth and State government on the design principles for a national redress scheme or failing agreement on a national redress scheme for a Victorian redress scheme before making any further material changes. It continues to have confidence in the integrity and professionalism of the Independent Commissioners and Assessment Panel under the Melbourne Response.

We urge all governments to avoid any unnecessary delays in establishing a national redress scheme available to all survivors of child sexual abuse within non-government and government institutions across Australia.

Our detailed responses to the specific recommendations of the Ryan Review are set out in the attached table.

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