



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

### Historic review of Church governance presented to leaders

Media Release

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The Australian Catholic bishops have welcomed a report into Catholic Church governance practices and possible reforms, which was presented to them shortly before last week's plenary meeting.

The report, entitled *The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia*, was commissioned by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference following a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The report is 200 pages long and includes 86 recommendations.

"The members of the Governance Review Project Team are to be congratulated on producing such a substantial piece of work, with far-reaching implications for the Church's life and mission," said Archbishop Mark Coleridge, president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

"To do it justice, the bishops will now take advice, consider the report in depth, conduct discussions at a provincial level, and otherwise prepare for a full discussion at their November plenary. This will allow them to then publish the report and respond to it."

Archbishop Coleridge noted that the report, dealing as it does with so many aspects of Church governance, will necessarily become a significant contribution to the ongoing work of prayerful reflection and discussion leading up to the formal assemblies of the Plenary Council.

"The whole Church in Australia is presently engaged in a process of deep reflection and discernment on the life and mission of the Church in the immediate and longer-term future," said Archbishop Coleridge.

"We owe a debt of gratitude to the Governance Review Project Team for their important and comprehensive contribution to this ongoing process of discernment. The report will undoubtedly contribute to the eventual formation of proposals to be considered during the Plenary Council."

The report identifies key principles of good ecclesial governance, such as subsidiarity, stewardship, synodality, dialogue, discernment and leadership. It offers important ideas on how the Church might enhance the leadership role of lay people and ensure appropriate co-responsibility at parish and diocesan levels.

"The bishops look forward to considering the report in depth and to its eventual public release," Archbishop Coleridge said.