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100% of Religious Institutes named in Royal Commission Join National Redress Scheme

“The commitment of Catholic Religious Australia members to work compassionately with survivors of child sexual abuse has been ongoing for 20 years and continues to be demonstrated by religious institutes joining the National Redress Scheme (NRS),” said Br Peter Carroll FMS, President of Catholic Religious Australia (CRA).

All 57 religious institutes named in the Royal Commission data survey have either been declared or have committed to join the NRS in writing. All the largest religious institutes in the country have been officially declared by the Minister. In addition, numerous religious institutes not named in the Royal Commission have also joined or are committed to joining the NRS.

The participation of religious institutes in the NRS represents hundreds of organisations providing education, health, aged care, and other social services for which religious institutes have been responsible currently or in the past.

Since the start of the NRS, CRA has taken a leadership role in providing advice and support to religious institutes to assist them in joining the NRS. CRA membership is varied and whilst many have had responsibility for children, others have had no role working with children. Each religious institute has made this commitment to the NRS as an independent entity.

“Catholic religious institutes believe in the NRS; we want the NRS to work effectively, we want it to be successful for survivors. The NRS is a valuable pathway for survivors and one that provides a simpler, less traumatic alternative to civil litigation,” said Br Peter.

During the past 20 years, religious institutes have paid survivors hundreds of millions of dollars in settlements and professional assistance, provided counselling and formal apologies. Leaders of institutes have acknowledged the pain suffered by survivors, their families and loved ones. The moneys paid can never make up for the damage that has been inflicted. Religious institutes are working with survivors every day, continuing to offer ongoing pastoral ministry focussed on support and healing processes for them and their families.

This support is given against a backdrop of continuing to provide services to vulnerable and marginalised members of the community, such as refugees and asylum-seekers, the homeless, the economically disadvantaged, First Australians, victims of domestic violence and many others.

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“Nothing can right the wrongs of the past. The Church is changing and religious institutes are systematically implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission to ensure the safety of children in all settings and to reform the governance and culture of the Church. These reforms will help to safeguard against the crimes of the past and prevent them occurring again in Catholic institutions,” said Br Peter.

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