



JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

December 17, 2018

Report outlines Church's progress since Royal Commission ended

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia have submitted a joint report to the National Office for Child Safety (NOCS) on the Catholic Church's implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The report was posted on the ACBC and CRA websites last Friday to coincide with the first anniversary of the completion of the Royal Commission, as required by one of the Commission's recommendations. It is expected it will be published on the NOCS website alongside other non-government institutions' reports in the coming days.

The annual report follows the Church's official response to the Royal Commission, delivered at a joint ACBC-CRA press conference in August. On the same day, the final reports of the Church's Truth, Justice and Healing Council were also published online.

"While acknowledging that there is much more work to be done, the first annual report outlines a series of actions taken during the past 12 months – indeed, over the past three decades – and signals the determination of the bishops and religious leaders to do what is required," said Archbishop Mark Coleridge, president of the ACBC.

The annual report looks at the work of some important Catholic organisations, including the Implementation Advisory Group, an advisory body monitoring the Church's response to the Royal Commission and its recommendations, and Catholic Professional Standards Ltd, an independent company developing safeguarding standards and auditing compliance with those standards.

At the grassroots level, safeguarding activities continue in congregations, schools, dioceses and agencies across the country.

The report also explores the Church's engagement with the National Redress Scheme, in which 27 of 35 archdioceses, dioceses and eparchies are now participating, and which the first religious order has now joined.

More dioceses and religious institutes are currently having applications to join the Scheme processed by the Department of Social Services and are expected to join in the coming months.

CRA president Sr Monica Cavanagh RSJ said "Catholic religious continue to acknowledge the depth of pain endured by survivors of abuse within the Catholic Church and all those who have been hurt by that abuse".

The recent National Day of Sorrow and Promise kept the survivors – and the damage done to them – front of mind for religious brothers, sisters and priests, and follows other local and national initiatives over the past year focused on delivering a clear promise for a better, safer future.

As part of the ongoing work to address child sexual abuse in Catholic settings, Archbishop Coleridge will attend a gathering of the presidents of episcopal conferences from around the world at the Vatican in February.

He said Pope Francis' decision to hold such a rare gathering demonstrates the urgency of the issue internationally, but he acknowledged that action – not more talking – was what was needed from the meeting.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Gavin Abraham
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
M: 0408 825 788
E: media@catholic.org.au

Sylvia MacRitchie-Hook
Catholic Religious Australia
M: 0410 644 356
E: comms@catholicreligious.org.au