



Diocese of Broome W.A.

PO Box 76 Broome WA 6725

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To my sisters and brothers across the Kimberley,

The Broome Diocese wishes to acknowledge the verdict handed down in the Perth District Court with respect to multiple charges against the former bishop, Christopher Saunders. We express our gratitude to the Western Australia Police Force and to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions of Western Australia for their commitment to bringing this matter before a jury.

Most importantly, our diocese acknowledges the courage of victims, survivors and other witnesses who came forward to express their truth. They showed extraordinary resilience and commitment through a long and difficult process. They deserved to be heard with compassion and treated with dignity.

We are deeply sorry for the hurt they have experienced. We are sorry for the shame they have endured. We are sorry that it has taken so long for their voices to be heard and for their pain to be acknowledged. We will do all we can to reach out to them for hope and healing.

We are acutely aware that the victims of this betrayal are not just those who have told their stories to police and before the court. Trust has been broken and wounds of betrayal and division have been exposed across the diocese. The hurt extends to those who have placed their trust in our leadership and our Church. Many who have served their parishes and their communities selflessly have been left with difficult questions and unresolved feelings.

How could such a proud, caring and determined diocese that features such remarkable communities and people be home to such a betrayal of trust? How could our diocesan leadership be involved in such heartless events?

We can at least respond to these questions with a renewed commitment to ensuring that our diocese today is a place of safety, respect and accountability. From our Cathedral to the most remote communities, we will do all we can to create an environment of trust and openness. We want to ensure that people are treated with dignity and compassion and continue to seek authentic and peaceful relationships, even if we do not always agree with each other.

Over the coming months, I will visit many parts of our diocese. This will be a time of grieving, listening and walking together on a synodal journey into a compassionate next stage for our diocese. I encourage you to raise any concerns or comments that can help



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during this period of healing.

If you require support following the verdict and the stories emanating from the trial, we encourage you to seek assistance. Our diocesan and parish staff can help to connect people with independent support services.

We ask Our Lady Queen of Peace, the patroness of our diocese, to intercede for us and to accompany us on this journey of reconciliation, healing and hope.

I remain yours in the Divine Word-

Tim Norton SVD

Bishop Diocese of Broome