



## **STATEMENT OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON RELEASE OF FINAL REPORT OF ROYAL COMMISSION**

**December 15 2017**

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has today released its final report, which includes a large number of recommendations, many of which will have a significant impact on the way the Catholic Church operates in Australia.

President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Archbishop Denis Hart, said the release of the final report is the culmination of almost five years of intense examination of the way in which many different institutions, including the Catholic Church, have historically failed children.

“This is a shameful past, in which a prevailing culture of secrecy and self-protection led to unnecessary suffering for many victims and their families,” Archbishop Hart said.

“Once again I reiterate my unconditional apology for this suffering and a commitment to ensuring justice for those affected.”

Sister Ruth Durick OSU, president of Catholic Religious Australia, said religious orders across Australia are committed to continuing the work of recent years to ensure a future in which the safety and protection of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.

“We acknowledge with gratitude the courage of all those survivors who have come forward to the Royal Commission,” Sr Ruth said.

“We will be taking very seriously the Royal Commission's report and have commissioned an initial assessment of its findings by the Truth, Justice and Healing Council. We expect the TJHC assessment to be completed early in 2018.”

Both leaders said the Church will continue to push for the introduction of a national redress scheme for the survivors of child sexual abuse in which the Church will participate.

“The success of this scheme lies with the cooperation of the state governments. Without their involvement, national coverage will be impossible,” they said.

“It is now time for state governments to act.”

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