



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

STATEMENT FROM THE BISHOPS ON THE ROYAL COMMISSION

30 November, 2012

With leaders of Religious Orders, we welcome the establishment of the Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse.

It is an opportunity for those who have suffered to obtain a compassionate hearing, justice and further healing.

It is also an opportunity for the Church's processes to be scrutinised with greater objectivity. This will allow further refinements that seek justice and pastoral care.

However imperfectly, this work has been going on in the Catholic Church for the last two decades. It will continue.

Once again, we renew our heartfelt apology to those whose lives have been so grievously harmed by the evil perpetrated upon them by some priests, religious and church personnel.

In order to work as effectively as possible with the Royal Commission, we have established a supervisory group of representatives from the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia.

This supervisory group will establish and oversee a new Council for the Royal Commission consisting of 10 people (including bishops, religious and lay people) served by an Executive Officer.

Our hope is that, in its search for truth, the Royal Commission will present recommendations ensuring the best possible standards of child protection in our country.

Painful and difficult as this might be for the Church, it is nothing compared to the hurt of those who have suffered sexual abuse, particularly by clergy and religious.

Through the days of our meeting, the bishops and religious leaders have appreciated the support of the prayers of many in the Australian Catholic community.

Archbishop Hart will be available for interviews between 11:30am and 2pm today. Please contact Beth Doherty on 0407 081 256 to arrange or email your request to media@catholic.org.au