



CONSTANT IN FAITH
CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

UPDATES

14 August 2014

Dear Friends,

I write to you following coverage given yesterday in the media to the submission lodged by the Truth Justice and Healing Council (TJHC) on Redress Schemes.

The submission lodged by the TJHC responded to an Issues Paper on this subject released by the Royal Commission.

The submission has been approved by the Supervisory Group comprising Bishops and Religious Leaders as well as the TJHC.

Archbishop Hart supports the concept of a mandatory national victims' redress scheme operated by the Government and funded by institutions responsible for the abuse, so long as the Church is dealt with in the same way as every other government and non-government organization.

The Archbishop remains firmly of the view that the Melbourne Response has delivered compassion and fairness in understanding the needs of victims of sexual abuse in the absence of any statutory or government auspiced scheme. It has served us well for the eighteen years it has been operating, but the time has come to look for a new model that meets the needs of victims, applies to all institutions involved with children and operates in accordance with current community standards.

The Archbishop on behalf of the Archdiocese of Melbourne rejects the claim made yesterday that the "Church has been investigating itself", as the Melbourne Response and the Independent Commissioners, Peter O'Callaghan QC and Jeff Gleeson QC, and the Compensation Panel which determines compensation, operate independently of the Archdiocese.

In a blog released yesterday afternoon by Mr Francis Sullivan of the TJHC, he states:

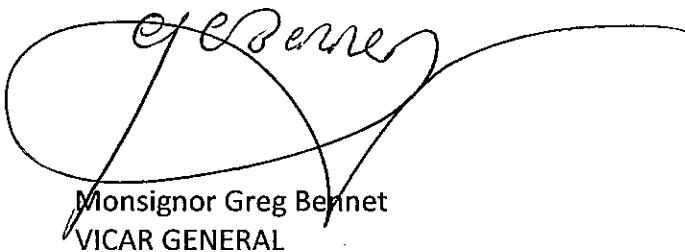
"...the Melbourne Archdiocese's complaints system does investigate complaints independently and determine compensation independently. However, it is not a national scheme for the Church although its strengths were noted in our submission".

Francis Sullivan goes on to say that the Royal Commission hearing in Melbourne next week:

"...is a great opportunity for the Melbourne Archdiocese and the independent commissioners to provide insight into the protocol which was one of the first in the world to be put in place."

The Archbishop looks forward to the opportunity to explain his support for the Melbourne Response when he appears before the Royal Commission in the coming fortnight.

Yours sincerely in Christ



Monsignor Greg Bennet
VICAR GENERAL