

MEDIA - Statement



Dated: Friday 29 June, 2018

Subject: Statement re: WA Government's response to the Royal Commission.
Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB, Catholic Archbishop of Perth

Archbishop Costelloe has welcomed the release of the Western Australian Government's response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. In particular he has welcomed the Government's decision to take part in the National Redress Scheme. The Archbishop pointed out that the Catholic Church, from the very beginning, has been proactive in supporting such a scheme. At the Royal Commission itself, Archbishop Costelloe reiterated his determination to enter the scheme as soon as this became possible. Now that the Government has made the important decision to join the scheme the Church will enter into and fully cooperate with the scheme here in Western Australia.

The Archbishop also welcomed the formal apology issued by the Government to all the victims and survivors of sexual abuse in government institutions in the State and, importantly, to the families of the survivors as well. No child or young person should ever have been subjected to this appalling abuse. Every person who has been hurt in this way, no matter what institution was or is responsible, deserves and needs a sincere apology, assistance to rebuild their lives, and an assurance that the institutions concerned are determined to ensure that such abuse never occurs again.

Because in the past the Catholic Church has been a major contributor to the horror of sexual abuse in our community the Church is now fully committed to being a part of the solution. The Safeguarding Project of the Archdiocese of Perth, which now sees fully trained local people in virtually every parish throughout the Archdiocese actively working to ensure that every child is safe in our parishes, is one example of this determination and this commitment. There are many others.

While the Catholic Church cannot change its teachings on the sanctity of the Confessional, including the absolute inviolability of the "sacramental seal", here in Western Australia, as throughout our country, the Church will continue to take every step available to it to ensure the safety and well-being, physical, psychological and spiritual, of every child and young person who takes part in the life of our communities.

The Archbishop is determined to ensure that this is, and remains, a fundamental priority of the whole Catholic community into the future.

Most Rev Timothy Costelloe SDB
Catholic Archbishop of Perth

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