



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

December 14, 2004

Statement on Senate Report into Children in Institutional Care

The Australian Catholic Bishops and the Leaders of Religious Institutes welcome the Report of the Senate Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care.

We have been moved by the courage of those who have laid bare their experiences before the Committee. An apology was first made in the 1996 document "Towards Healing", and we formally renew our apology to those whose abuse was perpetrated by Catholic Church personnel.

The revelations contained in the report are the very opposite of all that we would wish to stand for.

We are also deeply regretful for the hurt caused whenever the Church's response has denied or minimised the pain that victims have experienced. And we regret the hurt and distress caused to the many good people who have worked in this area.

We announce the formation of a "Senate Inquiry Action Group". The members of this group will be:

Dr Kristin Johnston, Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes.
Fr Brian Lucas, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.
Br Kevin Ryan, Christian Brothers.
Mr Paul Linossier, Catholic Welfare Australia.
Ms Myolene Carrick, Catholic Welfare Australia.

The mandate we have given this Action Group is:

"The Senate Inquiry Action Group shall make an analysis of the recommendations of the Senate Inquiry, with particular reference to how they apply to the structures, institutions and personnel of the Catholic Church, and provide the bishops and religious leaders with advice concerning the implementation of the recommendations.

"The Action Group shall present a preliminary report to the May 2005 meeting of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the June meeting of the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, together with a report on the work still to be done and an estimate of the time needed to present a final report."

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