



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Bishops publish response to Church governance review report

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A review of governance will help shape the way the Catholic Church in Australia understands co-responsibility in its life and mission and puts it into practice, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has said.

The Australia bishops reviewed and discussed the final version of the governance review report *The Light from the Southern Cross: Co-Responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia* during their recent plenary meeting.

The bishops finalised their initial response to the report, [which they have published today](#).

“A report that contains dozens of recommendations and was prepared over more than a year takes time to consider and absorb,” Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge said.

“So the bishops gave substantial time to the report during the meeting and in the preceding weeks and months. As the report’s authors said, it isn’t the last word on governance. Nor is the bishops’ response to the report.”

In their response, the bishops group topics and recommendations under six headings:

- the nature of the Church;
- the mission of the Church;
- co-responsibility;
- consultation, advice, decision;
- relationships between entities;
- evolution in Church governance.

“These are important and complex themes, on which much has already been written. But the report has the advantage of being fresh and locally produced. It speaks to the Australian situation but has implications for the Church beyond these shores,” Archbishop Coleridge said.

“It’s not for the bishops alone to discern the way forward for the Church at this time, and this report draws together other voices which the bishops welcome.

“*The Light from the Southern Cross* is the fruit of listening and will help the bishops listen more deeply to the voices of the Church and the voice of the Spirit.”

The bishops’ response points out that many of the matters raised in the document may be better handled by a local bishop or province rather than at the national level.

Where there are other matters that do warrant national consideration, the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia is another forum where that might be done.

“The bishops are very grateful for the remarkable work which the Governance Review Project Team has done,” Archbishop Coleridge said.

“It’s something that’s never been done before and will provide an invaluable point of reference as we look to the future.”