

PRESS STATEMENT

**Cardinal George Pell
Hotel Quirinale – Rome**

3 March 2016

STATEMENT FROM CARDINAL GEORGE PELL AFTER MEETING WITH BALLARAT SURVIVORS

I have just met with about a dozen of the Ballarat survivors, support people and officials and heard each of their stories and of their suffering. It was hard; an honest and occasionally emotional meeting.

I am committed to working with these people from Ballarat and surrounding areas. I know many of their families and I know of the goodness of so many people in Catholic Ballarat; a goodness which is not extinguished by the evil that was done.

We all want to try to make things better on the ground, especially for survivors and their families and I undertake to continue to help the group work effectively with the committees and agencies we have in Rome and especially the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

One suicide is too many; and there have been many such tragic suicides. I commit myself to work with the group to try to stop this, so that suicide is not seen as an option. I too, despite the separation of distance, want to make Ballarat a model and a better place for healing and peace.

I should not promise what might be impossible. We all know how hard it is to get things done. But I want it known that I support the work to investigate the feasibility of a research centre to enhance healing and improve protection.

The church-going people of the Ballarat diocese are known for their loyalty and charity and I urge them to continue to cooperate with the survivors to improve the situation.

I owe a lot to the people and community of Ballarat. It would be marvellous if the city became well known as an effective centre and example of practical help for all those wounded by the scourge of sexual abuse.

ENDS

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