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RELEASE OF FINAL ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT

Catholic Archbishop of Hobart, The Most Reverend Julian Porteous, welcomed the release of the final report from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse earlier today.

“The Church has rightfully faced criticism over its handling of cases of sexual abuse, many of which were brought to light by the Royal Commission in the past five years.

“We humbly accept that we failed to adequately respond to claims of abuse, which has caused unnecessary suffering to the lives of victims of sexual abuse and their families,” Archbishop Porteous said.

“I once again offer my sincere and unconditional apology on behalf of the Catholic Church, particularly in Tasmania.”

Archbishop Porteous acknowledged the important work undertaken by the Commissioners and their staff, and the victims of child sexual abuse who came forward to give evidence at the hearings.

“I recognise the difficulty and anguish survivors, both those who came forward to the Royal Commission and those who have not, have endured.”

Archbishop Porteous said he was “personally committed” to ensure such crimes are never repeated.

“We have been working for more than a year to deal effectively with issues that have been raised by the Royal Commission as they have unfolded. I have initiated a program, policies, and structures to ensure that the highest standards of safety for children and vulnerable people are established in the Archdiocese of Hobart,” His Grace said.

“The Catholic Church in Tasmania treats allegations of abuse extremely seriously. The Church has a zero tolerance for abuse in any form, and supports the role of police and the courts in bringing perpetrators to justice.”

The Truth, Justice and Healing Council will produce an initial assessment of the report in early 2018. The Archdiocese of Hobart will use the findings of the assessment to guide the development of further protocols and standards.

“It is my fervent hope that the Church, humbled by this experience, can emerge a better servant of the Gospel and a source of good for all people it serves,” Archbishop Porteous concluded. **ENDS.**