



# Media release

Date: 15 December 2017  
For immediate release

## **Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst**

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## Statement regarding Royal Commission final report

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has today released its final report.

Bishop of Sandhurst Les Tomlinson said the report will make for distressing reading.

“The release today of the Royal Commission report into Child Sexual Abuse is deeply distressing for survivors, the wider community and the Church.” he said.

“I have not yet read the full report, however during the past five years I have watched as the Royal Commission has unfolded and, like all of us, have been deeply shocked and saddened by the abuse carried out by priests, religious and lay people. It is with a great sense of humility and sadness that I read this report.

“The work of the Royal Commission, together with the courage of the survivors, has already brought about change, and the Church is continuing to work diligently to ensure these failures are never repeated.

“It is now time for a renewed focus on child and vulnerable adult protections. There have been significant reforms over the past years and it is now the responsibility of the Church to continue this work.

“The Diocese of Sandhurst, through its leadership, has committed to the necessary changes, ensuring that children are as safe as they can possibly be in all schools and parishes.

“By way of tangible example significant improvements to strengthen the child safety focus of the Diocese of Sandhurst to date have included:

- Reviewed and introduced new policies and procedures;
- Education through mandatory child safety training programs for clergy, staff and volunteers;
- New roles and responsibilities including the appointment of a Diocesan Child Safety Officer;
- Increased staffing and resources highlighting child protection activities with a dedicated Professional Standards Committee to respond to complaints against people; and
- Progressing with the implementation of the new Victorian Child Safe Legislation.

“I would like to state my support for the apology given earlier today on behalf of the Catholic Church in Australia by Archbishop Denis Hart, in which he once again reiterated an unconditional apology for this suffering and a commitment to ensuring justice for those affected.”

Bishop Les Tomlinson DD

**Bishop of Sandhurst**

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