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UPDATE ON ROYAL COMMISSION UNDERTAKINGS – CHRISTIAN BROTHERS

Re-examinations already underway and counselling offers taken up

The Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers has announced it is already working with individuals on the re-examination of settlements, following the Royal Commission in Perth.

A number of abuse survivors have also sought to take up the offer of ongoing counselling, made at the conclusion of the public hearings in Western Australia.

These actions are a direct result of specific undertakings made at the Royal Commission:

1. *Providing survivors of abuse suffered at facilities operated by the Christian Brothers with ongoing professional psychological counselling, for life if needed.*
2. *Being open to re-examining cases that have been settled on demonstrably unjust and unreasonably low terms.*

“Even before the public hearings in Perth commenced, the Christian Brothers had already started re-examination of settled matters”, said Brother Julian McDonald, Deputy Province Leader, Christian Brothers Oceania.

“This commitment had been made following the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry in 2013 and we reaffirmed this undertaking at the conclusion of the public hearings of the Royal Commission in Perth. As such, re-examination is not limited to West Australian cases.

“Whilst the Christian Brothers are committed to protecting the privacy and dignity of those involved, we can announce that we are already working with a number of the individuals in line with our public commitments.

“The re-examination of settled cases is being undertaken on a case-by-case basis, as this ensures that we can better respond to individual needs and circumstances.

“And, more broadly, we will continue to refine the issues and processes that underpin the re-examination of cases as we move forward, to ensure that our response continues in a manner that is caring, compassionate and responsible.

“In respect of our undertaking in Perth to provide counselling, lifelong if needed, to the survivors of abuse, we have already responded to a number of requests and arrangements have already been put in place for that to occur.

“Importantly, counselling is provided by independent and professional experts.

“The Christian Brothers reiterate this offer of professional psychological counselling to anyone who has suffered abuse in Australian facilities operated by Christian Brothers.

“These latest steps build on a foundation of 20 years work with the survivors of abuse at Christian Brothers’ facilities in Western Australia.

“Whilst we have already achieved much, there is much more work to be done to address the failures of the past and rebuild the lives of those who have suffered enormously from the consequences of abuse”, said Brother Julian McDonald, Deputy Province Leader, Christian Brothers Oceania.

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