

Facing the Truth

Learning from the Past How the Catholic Church in Victoria has Responded to Child Abuse

Fact Sheet 1 The Melbourne Response and Towards Healing

3 October 2012

Allegations of sexual and other abuse within the Catholic Church in Victoria are dealt with under the *Melbourne Response* for the Archdiocese of Melbourne and by *Towards Healing* for all other dioceses and religious institutes of the Catholic Church in Australia.

Principles

Towards Healing sets out the principles that form the basis of the Church's response to complaints of abuse. The principles apply throughout Australia.

A key principle is the Church's strong preference that all allegations of criminal conduct be reported to and investigated by the police. The *Melbourne Response* and *Towards Healing* will not investigate an allegation of criminal conduct that has not previously been reported to the police unless the complainant declines to go to the police despite the Church's encouragement that they do so.

Melbourne Response

The *Melbourne Response* sets out the procedures for responding to complaints of abuse in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. The *Melbourne Response* receives and enquires into allegations of sexual and other abuse by priests, religious and lay persons working in the Archdiocese of Melbourne under the control of the Archbishop of Melbourne. Persons within the Archdiocese of Melbourne covered by the *Melbourne Response* include:

- Parish priests;
- Assistant priests in parishes;
- Chaplains appointed by the Archbishop to hospitals, schools, universities and other works of the Archdiocese whether diocesan or religious;
- Employees of the Archdiocese or any agency of the Archdiocese;
- Volunteers engaged in an activity in a parish or agency of the Archdiocese.

Sexual and other abuse by Church personnel should be reported to an Independent Commissioner whose office has been established by the Archbishop of Melbourne to enquire into and advise him with respect to allegations of sexual or other abuse. Anyone with complaints of abuse by priests, religious and lay persons under the control of the

Archbishop of Melbourne is asked to call (03) 9225 7979 and you will be referred to an Independent Commissioner.

Information about the *Melbourne Response* is available at www.cam.org.au/Melbourne-Response

Towards Healing

The procedures set out in *Towards Healing* for responding to individual complaints of abuse apply to the dioceses of Ballarat, Sandhurst and Sale and to all religious congregations in Victoria. *Towards Healing* covers any cleric, member of a religious institute or other persons who are employed by a diocese or religious institute or appointed to a voluntary position in which they work with children or young people or engage in other forms of pastoral care. Persons in the dioceses of Ballarat, Sale and Sandhurst and religious institutes covered by *Towards Healing* include:

- Parish priests;
- Assistant priests in parishes;
- Chaplains to hospitals, schools, universities and other works whether diocesan or religious;
- Employees of a diocese or any agency of the diocese;
- Employees of a religious institute and any other organisation that exercises pastoral ministry within, or on behalf of, the Catholic Church;
- Volunteers engaged in an activity in which they work with children or young people or engaged in other forms of pastoral care.

Information about the *Towards Healing* is available at www.catholic.org.au or by contacting the National Committee for Professional Standards on 1800 816 030 or (02) 9669 6218.

For more information and support

www.facingthetruth.org.au

The *Melbourne Response*

Ph: (03) 9225 7979

www.cam.org.au/Melbourne-Response

Towards Healing

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