

Facing the Truth

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

Fact Sheet 8 Carelink

18 April 2013

Carelink was established in 1996, as a core element of the *Melbourne Reponse*. Since then, it has facilitated the provision of counselling and other professional support services for approximately 570 primary and secondary victims of sexual and other abuse by clergy, religious and lay people within the authority of the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Secondary victims are typically the family members of victims or others affected by the abuse.

Carelink refers clients to psychiatrists, psychologists, other health care providers and counsellors, either nominated by the client or suggested by Carelink, who have the appropriate background and expertise to address sexual and other abuse and related problems. Carelink seeks to identify the individual's needs and put in place appropriate support services.

This support is offered to clients from the time their complaint is first made to the *Melbourne Reponse* and remains available for as long as is required, including after a compensation payment is made. Carelink support is also available to clients who

have made a complaint to the police and who are going through a court process.

Carelink funds treatment and counselling at no cost to its clients.

Like the *Melbourne Reponse's* Independent Commissioners and the Compensation Panel, Carelink operates independently of the Archbishop and the Archdiocese of Melbourne. It provides free assistance to victims.

Initially, each client is interviewed and assessed by Carelink so that individual needs can be identified. As part of this process, a detailed history is taken, which helps Carelink to understand how the abuse has affected various aspects of the client's life.

Carelink can also provide a report to assist the compensation panel in understanding the impact of abuse on a victim.

Carelink's Coordinator, Susan Sharkey, facilitates all client services with the support of an assistant coordinator. Since 2009, the consulting psychiatrist to Carelink has been Dr Susan Brann.

For more information and support

www.facingthetruth.org.au

The *Melbourne Response*

Ph: (03) 9225 7979

www.cam.org.au/Melbourne-Response

Towards Healing

Ph: 1800 816 030 or (02) 9669 6218

www.catholic.org.au