



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

media statement

Date: 1 December 2012

Catholic Church welcomes new police initiative

Statement by the Archbishop of Melbourne, Denis Hart

The Catholic Church welcomes the announcement by Victoria Police of the establishment of a taskforce to help bring the offenders of child abuse to justice.

The Catholic Church supports the role of Victoria Police as the appropriate authority to investigate criminal activity. We were pleased to hear the Deputy Commissioner of Victoria Police, Mr Ashton, say that victims now feel confident to take their allegations of abuse to the police. We hope this will enable the police to fulfil their role of gathering evidence, building valid conclusions and laying criminal charges.

We support an investigation into the deaths by suicide of people who were sexually abused as children. We believe a professional and independent review would not only establish the extent of this tragedy but also show the causes. It is critical that all allegations are tested and investigated.

The Church's processes are focused on responding to the needs of victims and preventing further abuse, rather than prosecuting criminal conduct. The Church encourages victims to report their complaints to police, assists them in doing so, and has made constructive proposals to facilitate this in the future in its submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Committee.

We look forward to explaining our proposals in relation to reporting to the police and the history of our relationship and correspondence with Victoria Police when we address the Parliamentary Inquiry.

We look forward to meeting with Victoria Police to discuss how the new Taskforce will operate and how we can most effectively co-operate with it.

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