



**From the Office of the
Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia**

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ROYAL COMMISSION'S WORK DEEPLY APPRECIATED

Statement by the head of the Anglican Church of Australia, Melbourne Archbishop Dr Philip Freier

The Anglican Church of Australia deeply appreciates the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which presents its final report to Federal Parliament today. The commissioners and their staff have been diligent for five years, delving into matters that must have been distressing for commissioners and staff as well as survivors.

Case studies involving branches of the Anglican Church have been shocking and distressing for Anglicans, and have confronted us with our failings.

The Anglican Church has worked assiduously since 2004 to make the church a safe place for all – especially for children – and we have made great strides, often in response to recommendations from the Royal Commission. But we admit that sometimes we have been slow to grasp the extent or severity of abuse, and that without the work of the Royal Commission we would not have been able to achieve this.

There has been a change in the wider culture of the Anglican Church about child abuse as all elements of the church have had to face our failures – a change that, again, was largely due to the Royal Commission and the Church's response.

The three-yearly General Synod or national assembly, which met in Queensland in September, introduced for the first time binding national standards on child protection for all clergy and church workers, including independent audits. It also set up mechanisms by which the Church can join a future Commonwealth redress scheme (as recommended by the Royal Commission), and acted to make past and present bishops more accountable.

Once again, I apologise on behalf of the Church to survivors, their families, and others harmed by our failures and by the shameful way we sometimes actively worked against and discouraged those who came to us and reported abuse.

The work of making the Church a safe place is never finished and cannot be taken for granted. We will engage with the final report released today to improve our systems, protocols and procedures.

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