



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

### **STATEMENT ON SENTENCING OF ARCHBISHOP PHILIP WILSON**

The Catholic bishops of Australia acknowledge that the effects of sexual abuse can last a lifetime, but we hope that today's custodial sentence brings some sense of peace and healing to those abused by deceased priest James Fletcher.

It takes great courage for survivors to come forward to tell their stories. Survivors have been vital in helping us learn the lesson of our shameful history of abuse and concealment, which was laid bare in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and state inquiries, including the Cunneen Inquiry.

The Church has made substantial changes to ensure that abuse and cover-up are not part of Catholic life and that children are safe in our communities.

We will continue to work with all those in the Church and beyond who are seeking to put in place strong and consistent standards of safeguarding throughout Australia, including how we respond to allegations of sexual abuse.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has no further comment to make at this time.

July 3, 2018