

MEDIA RELEASE – Friday, June 5, 2015



RESPONSE TO ROYAL COMMISSION FINDINGS ON ST ANN'S SPECIAL SCHOOL

The Catholic Archdiocese of Adelaide will circulate the Royal Commission's final report into the St Ann's matter to every Catholic school principal in the State.

The Vicar General Father Philip Marshall and Catholic Education SA Director Mrs Helen O'Brien today welcomed the release of the final report and said they wanted principals to examine the findings and ensure that they were complying with policies and practices that have been introduced over the past decade.

The report makes it clear that at the time of the abuse in the late 1980s, while there was no requirement to undertake police checks on employees, this and other systemic failures at the school allowed Brian Perkins, a school bus driver, to abuse intellectually disabled young people.

The report also points out that procedures and policies are now in place that, as far as possible, ensure the abuse of the past cannot happen again.

The Commission found that while the group approach that the Church took to the payment of 'gifts' to former students of St Ann's was positively received by some families, for others it was not viewed as an adequate response.

"The group approach was objectively a reasonable response by the Church to the large number of complaints made by former students and families, particularly where the students had intellectual and communication disabilities," the report states.

Archbishop Philip Wilson offered a "full and complete" apology to the students and their families in 2002 and Fr Marshall today repeated the Church's deep sorrow for the suffering and anguish caused by the events of the past.

Fr Marshall and Mrs O'Brien will be available for interview at 1pm today at the Catholic Education Office 116 George Street, Thebarton.

Further information:

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