



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

media release

Date: 18 November 2016

***Melbourne Response* compensation limit to double**

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne has today announced an increase to the *Melbourne Response's* compensation cap for survivors of abuse from \$75,000 to \$150,000, with effect from January 1st 2017.

The Archdiocese's decision was made following a review of the *Melbourne Response* by retired Federal Court Judge, the Hon. Mr Donnell Ryan QC, the on-going work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the announcement this month by the Commonwealth Government of its intent to introduce a redress scheme commencing in 2018 for the survivors of institutional child sexual abuse.

Archbishop Hart said that he "regrets that this announcement has taken longer than he had hoped. This has occurred because of hearings of the Royal Commission in which the Archdiocese was involved and the extended time taken by the Commonwealth Government to announce its position on a Commonwealth redress scheme. Our objective has been to seek to align any change in compensation under the *Melbourne Response* to the decisions by government on compensation for survivors to ensure survivors have equal access and treatment".

Archbishop Hart said that "the Melbourne Archdiocese is committed to a fair system of redress. We have decided it is right to both increase the compensation cap for survivors of abuse and re-visit cases for survivors of child sexual abuse if these survivors would have received a higher offer had the new arrangements been in force at the time their case was heard".

He said that "The *Melbourne Response* has helped many survivors since its introduction 20 years ago. We have listened to survivors and we will continue to do so. Today's announcement is a reflection of this."

In 2014 Archbishop Hart announced that he would revisit the compensation arrangements of the *Melbourne Response*. Mr Ryan's report included recommendations to double the maximum compensation to \$150,000 and that previous cases could be re-opened if the survivor would have received a higher offer had these arrangements been in force at the time their case was heard.

For survivors of child sexual abuse who have proceeded through the Melbourne Response since the announcement of the Ryan Review in April 2014, the additional monetary payment will be the difference between what the survivor would have received if a cap of \$150,000 was in place at the relevant time less payments already received.

For survivors of child sexual abuse who have proceeded through the Melbourne Response prior to the announcement of the Ryan Review in April 2014 the additional monetary payment will be the difference between what the survivor would have received if a cap of \$150,000 was in place at the relevant time less the payments already received adjusted for inflation.

It is our intention to communicate initially with those survivors of child sexual abuse who have been through the Melbourne Response since April 2014 and with those who have been in contact with the Archdiocese to inform them of the additional compensation available to them and subject to their agreement to make payment to them by Christmas.

All other survivors of child sexual abuse who have been compensated under the Melbourne Response will be invited to make application to have their compensation re-considered. Application forms and further information is available at www.cam.org.au/professional-standards.

Further modifications to the procedures of the Melbourne Response arising from the Royal Commission are being considered and will be the subject of a later announcement.

The Archbishop says "I am encouraged by the recent announcement by the Commonwealth Government and now await specific details of the scheme and also a decision by the Victorian Government on whether it will opt in to the Commonwealth scheme.

I urge all governments to support a scheme that provides survivors with equal access and treatment no matter in which jurisdiction or institution the alleged abuse occurred". (ENDS)

Media enquiries: Shane Healy
Director, Media & Communications
Mobile: 0417 928 588