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## **Bishop Paul Bird's response to the Royal Commission's Report into Case Study 28**

The Catholic Bishop of Ballarat Paul Bird has received the report from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in relation to the Diocese of Ballarat in Case Study 28.

The Royal Commission has found serious failures in the way the Diocese responded to child sexual abuse. Bishop Bird said that mishandling of complaints against priests and church personnel and a lack of response to such complaints led to unnecessary suffering for many victims and their families and has brought distress to communities throughout the diocese.

He said that the Church should be a safe place for everyone but the history brought to light in the Royal Commission's inquiry has shown that the Church was not safe for those who were victims. "Where the failures of my predecessors allowed abuse to occur, I offer my heartfelt apology."

Bishop Bird added that he is confident that the diocese and its parishes and schools now have the policies and procedures required to provide a safe environment for children. He said that there is a firm commitment from all those who minister in parishes, schools and social services across the diocese to the safety and wellbeing of children in their care.

Bishop Bird said that the Church would learn from the case study and the forthcoming final report from the Royal Commission, both to assist those who have suffered in the past and keep children safe now and in the future

*+ Paul Bird*

Paul Bird CSsR

Bishop of Ballarat