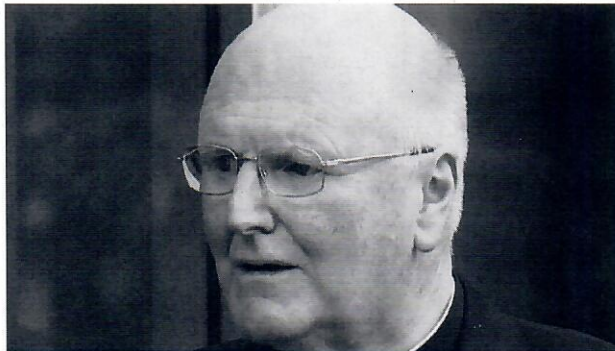


## THE AUSTRALIAN

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### Archdiocese doubles compo cap for clergy sex abuse victims



Archbishop Denis Hart. Picture: Aaron Francis

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The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne has doubled its compensation cap for victims of clergy sex abuse from \$75,000 to \$150,000.

The increase will take effect from January 1 and the decision was made after a review of compensation program the Melbourne Response by retired Federal Court judge Donnell Ryan QC.

Archbishop Denis Hart yesterday said 355 people had so far received compensation under the scheme, which was introduced by his predecessor, the then archbishop George Pell.

He said just over \$15 million had been paid to victims and it was expected that by doubling the cap, the archdiocese would pay another \$15.3m to abuse victims.

He said all that victims who had already been through the Melbourne Response process would have to do would be to fill out an application form.

“They won’t have to come and talk to us, or start it all over again and start the trauma and anxiety again,” he said.

Archbishop Hart said because compensation was in transition with the idea of a national scheme, he would be giving Mr Ryan’s report to the child sex abuse royal commission for their advice.

“Rather than jiggle a little bit here and jiggle another bit now, we’re wanting to work towards a smooth transition which will be less traumatic to those who have suffered,” he said.

For victims who have already been through the Melbourne Response since the review was announced in 2014, the extra payment will be the difference between what they would have received if a cap of \$150,000 was in place at the relevant time, less payments already received.

For people who received payment before the review, they will receive the difference between what they would have received, less payments and adjusted for inflation.

Truth, Justice and Healing Council chief executive Francis Sullivan said the announcement was a clear indication that the archdiocese was working hard to provide fair redress and continuing care to survivors.

“This has been a difficult challenge for the archdiocese,” Mr Sullivan said.

“Archbishop Denis Hart has shown a willingness to listen and the leadership to make the appropriate changes.”