



concerned Catholics

of the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese

A response to the Royal Commission

MEDIA RELEASE

Concerned Catholics Chair appointed to major governance review panel

29 January 2019

Professor John Warhurst AO, Chair of Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn, has been appointed to a governance review panel on a key Church body tasked with overseeing the Catholic Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Implementation Advisory Group was established by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia shortly after the Royal released its final report in December 2017.

Professor Warhurst says he is looking forward to working alongside other members of the review team convened by the Hon Neville Owen, former Chair of the Truth Justice and Healing Council.

"In their response to the Royal Commission released in August last year, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia accepted the Royal Commission's recommendation that the Church reviews its governance practices," Professor Warhurst said.

"It's encouraging to see the IAG has made this review a priority by appointing this panel.

"Many of the Royal Commission's findings identified the power of the bishops, the absence of transparency and accountability, and the ad hoc approach to diocesan structures (to name a few) as serious impediments to what the community might expect of a significant institution in Australia in the twenty first century.

"This review is an historic opportunity to establish nationally consistent mechanisms in local parishes and dioceses to enable greater accountability and to ensure lay people, especially women are involved in decision making at all levels of the Church.

"Many crucial governance processes, including the appointment of bishops, have been conducted behind closed doors for too long.

"I am confident that this review will expose the need for grass roots reform and lead to significant change in the way the Church conducts not only its business practices, but many of the cultural issues which have been identified as central to the abuse scandal," Professor Warhurst said.

Like a number of such bodies established in recent years, the IAG is structurally linked to the Church but functionally independent.

Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn is a group in the Canberra-Goulburn Archdiocese concerned about a number of governance, cultural and structural issues arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. We seek an effective voice for lay people in the administration and direction of our church.

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