



MEDIA RELEASE

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Respected leaders named to conduct Church governance review

A panel of experts has been convened to conduct a national review of the governance and management structures of Catholic dioceses and parishes, including in relation to issues of transparency, accountability, consultation and lay participation.

The review was a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse after the Commission concluded that the governance and management of some dioceses and parishes contributed to the child sexual abuse crisis.

Among other organisations, the review will consider the approaches to governance of Catholic health, community services and education agencies – as suggested by the Royal Commission.

Archbishop Mark Coleridge, president of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), said the review of governance will examine how Church structures – some of which were devised centuries ago – can be improved.

“We cannot ignore the wisdom that the Church has handed down through the years, but we must also be mindful that some of our practices fail to acknowledge and draw upon the best practice of other large, contemporary organisations,” he said.

Sr Monica Cavanagh rsj, president of Catholic Religious Australia (CRA), added: “The Royal Commission uncovered some practices that could have exacerbated the abuse of children and hampered the response to that tragic reality.

“The establishment of this panel is another step in our serious response to the Royal Commission and will help establish a way forward for the Church into the future.”

The members of the panel are:

- Ms Pauline Connelly, chancellor of the Archdiocese of Adelaide, deputy director of Centacare Catholic Family Services, Adelaide;
- Rev Dr Brendan Daly, lecturer in canon law, Good Shepherd College, Auckland, New Zealand;
- Mr Jack de Groot, CEO of the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW and chair of the Church’s Implementation Advisory Group;
- Sr Professor Isabell Naumann ISSM, president, Catholic Institute of Sydney;
- Justice Neville Owen, former Supreme Court justice in Western Australia, former chair of the Truth, Justice and Healing Council, which facilitated the Church’s engagement with the Royal Commission, current member of the Pontifical Council for the Protection of Minors;

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- Adjunct Professor Susan Pascoe AM, president and chair of the Australian Council for International Development, former Commissioner of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and former executive director of the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria;
- Professor John Warhurst, Emeritus Professor of Political Science at the Australian National University and chair of Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn.

The panel produced a progress report for the presidents of ACBC and CRA today and will produce an interim report by the end of October. A final report should be provided to CRA and the ACBC in the first half of 2020.

The governance review project plan [can be found here](#).

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