

18th October, 1996.

Professor J. R. Ball,  
55 Victoria Parade,  
EAST MELBOURNE, 3002.

Dear Professor Ball,

### **THE SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL**

Further to our recent discussions, I record our current understanding of the role of 'The Support Professional'. Our thinking has evolved considerably since that first meeting.

The Archbishop will shortly be announcing a range of initiatives to deal with complaints of sexual abuse by priests, religious and others associated with the church. He wishes to appoint you as the 'support professional' to fulfil the role described below and illustrated on the attached chart.

The initiatives contemplated contain four elements: Investigation; compensation; pastoral response and professional support. One or more contact persons will represent the 'public face' of the plan.

The proposal put to you by the Archbishop would give you overall responsibility for the 'professional support' component of this plan.

#### **Professional Support**

This will be provided through a dedicated unit established under the aegis of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau without being publicly identified with the Bureau. This unit will provide administration, professional counselling and case management services to victims of alleged offenders who are identified as Church personnel within the Archdiocese.

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Your role will have a number of facets, the principal being to oversee the development of the unit and, where appropriate, to present to the Archbishop issues which emerge from this work.

Your responsibilities on a day to day basis will include:-

- \* To act as the 'public face' for clinical services provided to victims of Church abuse in the Archdiocese, which includes responding to media inquiries and requests for public statements.
- \* To oversee the employment of staff within the Case Management and Counselling Services Unit.
- \* To receive the assessment and case management plan for each client, as prepared by the Co-ordinator of the Unit.
- \* To negotiate elements of the case management plan if required.
- \* To authorize the plan as agreed with the Co-ordinator of the Unit.
- \* To approve the appointment of all consultants external to the Unit, who may provide counselling services to victims.
- \* To advise the Archbishop of the appointment of such consultants.
- \* To approve the fee structure of such consultants.
- \* To develop a protocol to monitor the work of the external consultants and to determine the appropriateness of the contact with them including the time frame for treatment.
- \* To provide consultant services and, where appropriate, referral for all victims requiring psychiatric treatment and support.
- \* To act as a consultant to the Case Management and Counselling Support (CMCS) Unit.
- \* To liaise with and assist the investigative and compensation panels as required.
- \* To advise the Archdiocese on strategic responses to sexual abuse.
- \* To conduct a six monthly review of the CMCS Unit to ascertain its clinical effectiveness, its administrative competence and the level of client satisfaction.

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The manner in which you operate on a day to day basis is very much up to you. However, the effectiveness of the Case Management and Counselling Service Unit will be largely conditioned by the close and co-operative working relationship between yourself and the Co-ordinator of the Unit.

### **Investigation**

The investigative element of the plan deals with the investigation of allegations of abuse, with a view to the formulation of a recommendation to the Archbishop as to what action, if any, should be taken in respect of the allegations. Mr. Peter O'Callaghan, Q.C., has agreed to accept an appointment as independent commissioner to head up the investigatory functions.

### **Compensation**

An assessment panel will be created to assess claims for compensation by victims of assault. The panel will offer ex gratia payments to victims as an alternative to the pursuit of legal proceedings against the Archbishop.

### **Pastoral Response**

A strategy will be developed to address the parish pastoral needs which result from such activity within a parish. The response team will operate at a parish level to offer support and a forum for parish healing.

Your contact within the Archdiocese will be the Vicar General. It is envisaged that initially your commitment will be for between half and one day per week, but this will become clearer once the operations of the services commences. Obviously, you will be remunerated by the Archdiocese and these terms still need to be discussed, as will the term and tenure of your appointment.

It is noted that from time to time you provide treatment to priests of the Archdiocese. Obviously, you will not have direct contact with persons who claim to be victims of such priests, but with that proviso no conflict of interest is perceived with your role as the Support Professional.

This letter is still at the status of draft proposal and I welcome your comments.

Yours sincerely,



Rev. Monsignor Denis J. Hart,  
VICAR GENERAL.