



## CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCKHAMPTON

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09 April 2015

My dear people

As you are aware the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* will conduct a Public Hearing in Rockhampton commencing on Tuesday, April 14.

When the Public Hearing was announced on 30 January 2015, the Chair of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, Justice McClellan said,

*“In April the Commission will travel to Rockhampton where the public hearing will focus on the experiences of children at St Joseph’s Orphanage, Neerkol, which was managed by the Sisters of Mercy. The case study will also examine the conduct of priests attached to the Diocese of Rockhampton who carried out duties at the Orphanage”. (end of quote)*

I give my wholehearted support to the work of the Royal Commission and I am glad that through the work of the Royal Commission those who have been so badly impacted by child sexual abuse will have the opportunity to be heard. I hope and pray that they may experience some healing from the opportunity the Royal Commission provides.

I offer my heartfelt apology to those who have suffered child sexual abuse by Catholic Church personnel and I also offer this apology to their families and to all those who have shared in their suffering.

During the coming weeks, I humbly seek your prayerful support for all who bravely step forward to share their story.

I pray that our Church will continue to acknowledge our past failings, listen with open hearts to the hurt and pain of those who have experienced abuse, and do all we can to assist them with their lives into the future.

I remain firmly committed to our journey of reconciliation with those whose lives have been impacted in any way by child sexual abuse and to continuing to do all we can to ensure that our parish communities are safe for all.

May Mary our Mother and St Joseph, pray for us.

**Bishop Michael McCarthy**