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## Bishop says no return for Ryan

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Page: 1

ONE of the Hunter's most notorious pedophile priests, Vince Ryan, was denied a first taste of freedom today after the State Parole Authority held over his release from jail following a 14-year sentence for child sex offences.

Ryan, 72, will remain in Long Bay Jail for at least another two months, but will not be returning to the Hunter even on his release under the terms of a formal memorandum of understanding with the Catholic Church's Maitland-Newcastle Bishop Michael Malone.

Ryan "certainly will not be in the Hunter and will not be in the diocese", the bishop said during an interview yesterday.

There was "no chance" Ryan could ever work again as a priest, Bishop Malone said.

The bishop's decision to require the disgraced priest to remain out of the region is in part a recognition of the extreme distress expressed by Ryan's 35 known victims and their families at the idea of his return.

"Oh my God, no," said the mother of one of Ryan's victims yesterday, after hearing of Ryan's imminent release from jail.

Continued Page 2

No return to Hunter for Ryan: Malone

From Page 1

She feared the impact on her son if he unexpectedly had contact with the priest.

"I thought I was going to lose my son [to suicide] many times," she said.

"That man has already wrecked so many lives. I don't want my son to ever have to face him again."

Ryan was expected to walk from Long Bay Jail today into a Corrective Services day release program halfway house in Sydney for newly paroled long-term jail inmates.

But the State Parole Authority unexpectedly held over its decision until late July, pending further reports.

Material before the Parole Authority included a report on the distress of his former victims about his imminent release and possible return to the Hunter.

Bishop Malone said the diocese had already started inquiries about appropriate housing in the Sydney area, where Ryan would be required to report to police and the State Parole Authority as a registered child sex offender.

Ryan had attended "various psychological classes and therapy to enable him to cope with life outside jail and hopefully to bring some kind of control over his pedophilic activities", the bishop said.

The expected day-release program would allow Ryan to "get used to life on the outside after his long period in jail".

Ryan was unlikely to be laicised, or defrocked, but was unable to operate as a priest after his faculties were removed following convictions for sexually abusing 35 boys, aged six to 14, between 1972 and 1991.

"He could be defrocked, as people describe it, but I take the line it's probably better to keep him connected to the Church so that we can monitor him, keep an eye on him if you like, and take responsibility for him," Bishop Malone said.

"I don't think people would look kindly on us if we just released him into the community."

Bishop Malone said Ryan had frequently expressed remorse and had been described as a model prisoner.

