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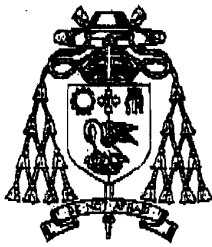
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St. Patrick's Cathedral
Melbourne Vic 3002

1st May 1997

**A MESSAGE FROM DR GEORGE PELL
CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE**

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to inform you that the Archdiocese's Carelink counselling and professional support service (Telephone: 03 9419 9118) has now been strengthened with additional resources and staff.

As you are aware, Carelink was introduced in October last year, to provide free counselling and pastoral care for victims of sexual abuse within the Church.

Since then, the processes which have been put in place to assist victims have been working well.

To provide a broader range of services, Carelink's functions have now been fully integrated with those of the Pastoral Response Office.

As the result of this up-grade in resources, Carelink now qualifies as the best initial contact point for parishes or members of the community seeking pastoral or spiritual support.

The serviced has been further strengthened by a team who have expertise in spiritual and pastoral counselling, headed by the Archdiocese's newly appointed Pastoral Response Co-ordinator, Ms. Maria Kirkwood, B.Ed., Grad. Dip. Arts (Social Sciences), who is also the Co-ordinating Chairperson for Pastoral Care in the Catholic Education Office.

Upon receiving an inquiry for help, the up-graded Carelink service will now first make a judgement about the type of care and support required. Its increased resources will allow it to provide victims with ready access to whatever support services are needed.

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The first point of contact for persons wishing to register a complaint concerning sexual abuse will remain the office of the Independent Commissioner, Mr. Peter O'Callaghan QC (Telephone: 03 9221 6190).

Finally, on behalf of all parishioners and clergy in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, I would like to extend a sincere vote of thanks to Helen Last and her assistants in the Pastoral Response Office, who provided counselling and assistance to victims in need, at a time when no other avenues of support seemed available.

In many ways, their pioneering work played an important role in shaping the attitude and response of the Church to the difficult issue of sexual abuse.

I am sincerely grateful for all of their efforts - a sentiment which I am sure will be endorsed by the broader sections of the Church, particularly in the parishes.

+ *George Pell*

ARCHBISHOP OF MELBOURNE