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News Release

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**ARCHBISHOP WILSON SAYS HE UNDERSTANDS
SEX ABUSE VICTIMS' ANGER**

Archbishop Philip Wilson today stated that widespread media coverage of sexual abuse and the Catholic Church this week has highlighted the intense anger of victims of abuse.

"They are angry not only about the shocking abuse they have suffered but also by their feeling that church authorities have failed to handle these matters properly," Archbishop Wilson said.

"I understand their anger. The church has made some grave mistakes in responding to the needs of victims and to the situation of perpetrators and we've learnt from these mistakes.

"I know that Archbishop George Pell and all bishops in Australia are very genuine in their desire to support and care for victims of abuse and it's important to know that proper procedures are in place."

Archbishop Wilson said the national guidelines for dealing with child sex abuse called *Towards Healing* and the Melbourne guidelines were all designed to care for victims.

"None of these procedures, particularly those involving compensation, are about 'hushing up' victims of abuse and to suggest otherwise is simply wrong," he said.

However, Archbishop Wilson said confidentiality clauses could be seen in ambiguous terms: "That's why *Towards Healing* procedures updated in December 2000 say clearly that no victims should be bound by confidentiality in final settlements."

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