

THE PASTORAL RESPONSE OFFICE

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne

383 Albert St, East Melbourne, VIC 3002

Administration: (03) 9639 0059 Pastoral Support: (03) 9639 3350 Fax: (03) 9639 0139

CONFIDENTIAL

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

His Grace, Archbishop George Pell recently announced a series of initiatives in response to sexual abuse. These include:

- the appointment of an Independent Commissioner, Mr Peter O'Callaghan, QC to investigate complaints of misconduct and sexual abuse involving priests, lay and religious who are or were under the control of the Archbishop of Melbourne;
- the setting up of Carelink, an independent service headed by Professor Richard Ball, to provide administration of counselling and professional support services.

Further information on these initiatives is enclosed which we would ask you to read.

With the development of these two agencies, this office has been requested by the Archbishop to forward the appropriate sections of your files to the respective offices, a necessary step in the process of referral to these newly appointed agencies.

We are also aware, and have clarified with the Archbishop's representatives, that you have entrusted your file and range of issues to this Pastoral Response Office, with its mandate to retain strict client confidentiality unless otherwise instructed by yourself. We want to reassure you that your right to confidentiality remains the first priority of all agencies now involved in assisting survivors.

Therefore we write to advise you that in order to receive the appropriate assistance from either Mr O'Callaghan in reference to complaints and compensation matters, or Professor

Ball (Carelink) for psychiatric, psychological counselling and support services, we need permission to transfer the relevant file information to their offices.

If you are already receiving help and the Archdiocese has been providing for the costs, we also need permission to request your therapist to contact Professor Ball with a view to providing a progress report.

This does not infer that Professor Ball is requesting access to the files held by your counsellor. It is an administration matter only.

We are happy to clarify the roles of these new agencies and any of the above matters with you by phone. We enclose the appropriate release form for you to complete, sign and return to our office at your earliest convenience. You may of course refuse us permission to hand over anything from your file if you feel that this would best serve your interests.

Please give this matter careful consideration and contact us if you are needing further discussion.

Yours faithfully,

Helen Last
PASTORAL RESPONSE OFFICE

Professor Richard Ball
CARELINK

Direct information on
CARELINK is available from Sue Sharkey, Co-ordinator, phone 9417 1267