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MC 99/

The Most Rev P Wilson DD JCL  
Archbishop of Adelaide  
Catholic Church Office  
GPO Box 1364  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear Archbishop Wilson

Thank you for your letter dated 17 December 2001 regarding reports of alleged sexual abuse at the St. Ann's Special School.

As you have indicated I have been provided with background information relating to this matter from the Director of Catholic Education, Mr Allan Dooley, and have been contacted by the Member for Elizabeth, Ms Lea Stevens MP. I have also been provided with copies of correspondence from the Public Advocate, Mr John Harley.

As you rightly point out in dealing with these issues it is important that any action taken by the parties does not jeopardise the possibility of bringing the alleged offender to trial. I note the actions currently underway by the Catholic Church in accordance with its published policy and processes "*Towards Healing*".

I advise that this matter is under consideration by the Attorney-General and the Ministers for Human Services and Police.

You should also note that the Public Advocate has called for an independent inquiry into these matters. Non-government schools are registered pursuant to part 5 of the *Education Act 1972* ("the Act") through a process of application to the Non-Government Schools Registration Board.

The Board, established under section 72 of the Act, has the power to review the registration of a non-government school and enquire into such matters as protection for the safety, health and welfare of students enrolled at the school. It is my view that the alleged failure by the school to provide for the safety, health and welfare of students is a matter for the Non-Government Schools Registration Board who **may** initiate a review of the school's registration.

I note your commitment to full cooperation with any properly constituted inquiry and thank you and Mr Dooley for providing me with the background information to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Buckby  
**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**  
/ /2002