

ARCHDIOCESE OF ADELAIDE

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I am writing this letter to you about a very serious matter.

In 1991 some allegations were raised regarding the possible sexual abuse of a small number of students at St Ann's Special School during the period from 1986 to 1991 by a worker. Those allegations were investigated by the police at the time, but my understanding is that there has been no outcome in that regard.

Recently it has been brought to my attention that there are now further allegations or suggestions that the alleged sexual abuse may have involved more students than those who were identified in 1991 as possible victims.

I offer my humblest apology to those who may be found to have been victimised and I express my deep sorrow that such events may have occurred in the life of the Church.

I am committed to ensuring that all of those allegations are addressed fully by the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Adelaide and that the fullest cooperation is given to the police and other responsible authorities in pursuing their inquiries into all the allegations.

At present we have not been able to identify all of the students who might have been concerned with the allegations. To assist in achieving that end, I am writing to you as parents of students enrolled at the relevant time to give you the opportunity to access the information currently available to us and to talk frankly with us about any concerns you might have in relation to the allegations.

I have established a contact point for you to access that available information. I encourage you to telephone Mrs Pauline Verity or Mrs Cathy Black, the contact persons on **REDACTED**. In addition to accessing information about the allegations, you will be provided with details of the Church's process in responding to sexual abuse allegations.

I have activated the Church's *Towards Healing* policy, which sets out the national principles and procedures for dealing with these issues, to respond to your inquiries and concerns. A key principle in the document is that "*Any form of sexual behaviour with a minor, whether a child or adolescent, is always sexual abuse. It is both immoral and criminal.*" Copies of *Towards Healing* are available to you through the contact person.

The police are conducting investigations and they have my full support and my full cooperation. If you believe you have any information that would assist the police in their inquiries, I encourage you to inform them by contacting CRIME-STOPPERS on 1800 333 000.

Parent Advocacy Inc. is also aware of the allegations and is available to provide you with information and support. You may phone either Linda Clifford on 8325 8109 or mobile **REDACTE** or Karen Rogers on 8341 1376 or mobile **REDACTE**.

I want you to know and I want to assure you that I am committed to the attainment of truth in the course of the investigations and to ensuring that justice is done. I am particularly committed to ensuring that the needs and concerns of the former students of St Ann's Special School and their families are cared for and accommodated. Please be assured that I will not step back from that commitment.

I am conscious in writing this letter that I have accessed information regarding your family and circumstances from our files at St Ann's Special School from 1986-1991. The information has been checked to the extent that I have been able to do so. It may be that your personal and family circumstances have changed since 1991. I apologise if in the addressing of this letter, or in providing this information to you, the information on which I am relying is no longer relevant.

Again, I am very sorry to have to raise this serious matter in this way. I hope we can work together to bring about justice and, in particular, to see to the care of the former students and their families.

Yours sincerely in Christ

+ Philip Wilson.

Most Rev P Wilson DD JCL
Archbishop of Adelaide

March 02