



## **Australian Province of the Society of Jesus**

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09 March 2016

As Provincial of the Society of Jesus in Australia (the Jesuits), I am committed to facing the truth about the abuse of children and young people that has occurred in our past and the terrible effects it has had on their adult lives.

To that end we are committed to accompanying and supporting survivors and their families through the healing process.

Earlier this year, a former Jesuit Brother, Victor Higgs, was sentenced in Adelaide, after pleading guilty to charges of abuse that occurred between 1968 and 1970, when he taught at St Ignatius' College, Adelaide. Victor Higgs ceased to be a Jesuit in 2001.

We condemn any abuse of children or young people, and offer an unreserved apology for the trauma caused by any Jesuit who betrayed others in this way.

We also encourage anyone with evidence of criminal behaviour committed by anyone in our ministries to report the matter to the police so that the appropriate investigation can be undertaken.

Victor Higgs taught at a number of our schools following a period of teaching in Adelaide. Although a significant amount of time has passed, the records that are available have been reviewed in detail. To date, we have no evidence that Victor Higgs' moves related to the events to which he subsequently pleaded guilty. However, we cannot discount this possibility.

It is fundamental to the long-term healing of victims of abuse that they understand that they will be supported with dignity and compassion if and when they choose to come forward, and of course at their own timing.

To that end anyone wishing to raise matters is gently encouraged to do so by whichever of these pathways feels most comfortable - either by contacting the Province's Office of Professional Standards on 03 9810 7312 or [professionalstandards@sjasl.org.au](mailto:professionalstandards@sjasl.org.au) or directly contacting our schools.

We must never forget the crimes committed against children. We will continue to work together to support survivors.

Fr Brian F McCoy SJ  
Provincial