



21 May 2018

Dear all,

An Open Letter to the Australian Jesuit Province and the Australian Community

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse handed its Final Report to the Governor General of Australia in December last year.

Although the Commissioners reported at key points since their appointment in January 2013, the completion of their work was an important milestone. In this [video](#), I reflect on the learnings I believe we can take from the Royal Commission and some of the work that we will be doing this year and beyond in response.

While the Australian Jesuit Province was not a specific focus of the work of the Royal Commission, I appeared before the Commissioners in February 2017 (as did Frank Brennan SJ and Brendan Kelly SJ). It was a humbling experience to listen to the commitment of so many people wishing to ensure that children be better cared for and protected.

For some months we have been carefully considering the recommendations of the Royal Commission and agree with the vast majority of them. Some require further consideration by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) and some are already in place within the Australian Province.

The Province has made a commitment to the Australian Childhood Foundation's Safeguarding Children Program. This will see all ministries in the Province seek accreditation as 'child safe organisations'. Our schools and other areas where there are young people are the first areas in which we are seeking accreditation.

The Province's Director of Professional Standards is responsible for implementing and maintaining the best safeguarding practices in our ministries and for assisting victim survivors of abuse. The Professional Standards office can be contacted on 03 9810 7300. Anyone requiring urgent support should contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.

We continue to encourage anyone who wishes to report a crime to do so directly to the Police in their State or Territory.

As part of our commitment to transparency, we published an inaugural Safeguarding Annual Report last year, detailing our efforts to safeguard children. It is available [here](#).

As the Provincial of the Australian Jesuits, I take responsibility for continuing and expanding this work. I give you my personal commitment that we will continue to accompany those that have suffered while seeking justice and healing.

Fr Brian F. McCoy SJ
Provincial