



Speaking the truth in love
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STATEMENT FROM MOST REV. ANTHONY FISHER OP
ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY

The Victorian Court of Appeal has today upheld the verdict of historical sexual abuse allegations against Cardinal George Pell in a 2-1 decision.

From the outset the Cardinal has strenuously maintained his innocence. He continues to do so notwithstanding today's decision.

Today's split decision amongst the judges is consistent with the differing views of the juries in the first and second trials, as well as the divided opinion amongst legal commentators and the general public. Reasonable people have taken different views when presented with the same evidence and I urge everyone to maintain calm and civility.

As the Cardinal may yet decide to appeal the judgment to the High Court of Australia, I am limited in my ability to comment on today's outcome.

Matters of the Cardinal's status within the Church can only be determined by the Vatican, not the Church in Australia. I anticipate that the Holy See may well wait until the appeal process has been exhausted.

I recommit myself and the Archdiocese of Sydney to doing all we can to ensure that past crimes are never repeated and that Church environments are the safest possible for children and vulnerable adults.

I pray for and will continue to support survivors of child sexual abuse at the hands of clergy and other members of the Catholic Church so that they may find justice and healing. I again say how sorry I am that you were harmed by people you should have been able to trust. I am conscious how you and your loved ones have had to live with the consequences of abuse for a lifetime.

I know that there are many in the Catholic community and beyond who will find it difficult to come to terms with this judgment, especially those who know the Cardinal and will struggle to reconcile this outcome with the man they know. I thank them for persevering in faith, hope and love.

As we wait to hear whether the legal process will continue, I will seek to provide pastoral support to those Catholics who may have found their faith tested.