

# Statement on the report of the Commission into Child Abuse in Ireland

+ *Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney*  
21 May 2009

I have only read the Executive Summary (and a few other sections) of the Irish report of the Commission into Child Abuse which deals mainly with physical cruelty, sexual abuse, neglect and emotional abuse in institutions for children from 1936 -1970 perpetrated by priests, brothers and nuns.

It is grim reading. Sexual and physical abuses are crimes. I was deeply moved by the brutality and cruelty suffered by the children. The only way forward is to acknowledge the wrongs that have been, to institute just procedures to process the complaints (where this has not been done), to offer help to healing and compensation. Sincere apologies have to be offered.

Please God this will be the beginning of the end of a sad and shameful period in the Catholic Church in Ireland. The Irish Church leadership is facing up to the past and they now face the difficult task of working towards the future.

The report will be examined thoroughly by us for any links to clergy or members of religious orders in Australia, and whatever needs to be done in the Sydney Archdiocese, and indeed more widely in Australia, will be done to bring justice to victims.

Ireland is not Australia. In 1996 Catholic bishops and religious orders in Australia established the Towards Healing protocol to investigate allegations of sexual abuse in the Church, and to provide support, pastoral care and justice to victims. This work continues.

The Catholic Church in Australia will continue to accept its responsibilities toward victims of sexual abuse, and I encourage anyone who may have been abused by a Catholic priest or a member of a religious order to contact the police or the Towards Healing contact line (1300 369 977).

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