

MEDIA RELEASE
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Public Consultation opens on Catholic Church's New Model for Complaints and Redress in Victoria

The Catholic Dioceses of Victoria have today announced the opening of a public consultation period for a new process of response to complaints and redress relating to abuse in the Catholic Church. It is important that voices of those who have experienced abuse are heard, and that their feedback helps to shape this new model.

The proposed model, **Pathways Victoria**, will provide an operationally independent structure for implementing the Catholic Church's National Response Protocol released earlier this year, and will provide a person-centred and trauma-informed response. This responds directly to Recommendations 7.7 and 16.37 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Pathways Victoria will replace the Melbourne Response and Towards Healing processes that have been in place for nearly twenty-five years and will operate alongside the vital and ongoing services of Carelink.

This new model will offer a set of compassionate, just and appropriately resourced processes to investigate complaints and respond to survivors, as an alternative to existing options such as the National Redress Scheme and civil litigation. It offers a pathway where survivors are listened to, acknowledged, compensated and given care. For those who seek it, survivors have an opportunity to reconnect spiritually, with the restoration of links with the Church community.

Early notification of this announcement was shared with individual survivors and advocacy groups to enable support to be sought where needed, as well as with key stakeholders including the Acting Premier and the Commission for Children and Young People.

Survivors, their support persons and others who have lived with the effects of abuse, or have professional experience in this area, are strongly encouraged to be represented in this consultation phase, which will run from 13 April until 14 May 2021.

A website has been established for Pathways Victoria, providing background and updates on the proposal, as well as information on how to participate in the consultation phase: www.pathwaysvictoria.com

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