



Pastoral Letter from the Bishop of Tasmania

9 November 2020

ANGLICAN DIOCESE
OF TASMANIA

THE RIGHT REVEREND
DR RICHARD CONDIE
BISHOP OF TASMANIA

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As you know, the Diocese of Tasmania is committed to providing Redress for survivors of historic sexual abuse that was perpetrated by leaders and officers in the Anglican Church. This has left deep scars on our history as a church, of which we are deeply ashamed.

Very sadly, there are many people whose lives have been affected to a devastating degree by these things. It is not just the survivor of abuse themselves who is affected, but their family members and friends, from one generation to another. It is a matter of restorative justice, recognition and support that we fulfill our obligations to provide financial redress to these brave people. We know that money cannot bring healing, but it is right that we respond. We are so thankful for survivors who have the courage to come forward for support, and we honour them.

Since June 2019 the Diocese finalised \$3.65 million in Redress payments to survivors. This is comprised of \$1.226 million through the National Redress Scheme; \$2.235 million through civil litigation settlements; and a further \$185,000 through our Pastoral Support and Assistance Scheme.

As reported to the Synod, we have sold around half of the 73 properties that we decided to sell in 2018 to fund this program. These will probably net slightly higher proceeds than we originally anticipated, and with the levies already collected on Parish funds, and direct contributions from some Parishes, we will have the ability to meet the original anticipated liability of \$8.6 million.

During the last year we have noticed that more and more survivors are using civil litigation rather than the National Redress Scheme. This is due in part to some changes by our state government in the way these actions can be made. Most civil claims are settled by negotiation outside of the court, and usually result in a much higher payment to the survivor than a Redress claim.

Earlier in the year we commissioned an updated report from our actuaries about the projections for future claims, taking these new trends into account. Based on new assumptions about the number of cases, and the proportion to be settled through civil litigation, and increased average settlement amounts, the actuaries have revised our anticipated liability. They have increased this estimate from the original \$8.6 million to \$23 million. This leaves us a shortfall in our planning of around \$15 million.

This is a very serious development for the Diocese, and we need to plan carefully for how we will address it. I have called together a Redress Fund Working Group to begin planning how we will make these funds available. The Group will need to assess all of our assets and income streams to identify possible sources of funds. Our hope is not to resort to a further strategy regarding property, but at this stage all the assets of the Diocese of Tasmania will be on the table for consideration. We know that this will have some impact on funding ministry in the future, so please pray that our gospel work will not be hampered by this. I am confident that we can find a way that minimises impact on our work, while still meeting our responsibility to help survivors of abuse.

I am of the deep conviction that this is a profoundly right thing for us to be doing, and that God is honoured when justice is served. Please pray for wisdom and courage as we face the future. We are confident because "he who began a good work in [us] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6).

With warm wishes in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. Below the name, there is a short horizontal line.

The Right Revd Dr Richard Condie
Bishop of Tasmania