



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**August 21, 2020**

## **Catholic leaders publish report on Church governance**

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia have today published an “important and substantial” document on the review of diocesan and parish governance and management in Australia.

The review was recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Church’s Implementation Advisory Group (IAG) oversaw the development of the report, *The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-responsible Governance in the Catholic Church in Australia*. The IAG engaged the Governance Review Project Team (GRPT) to research and study Church governance and to prepare the 208-page report, which includes 86 recommendations.

“*The Light from the Southern Cross* makes an important and substantial contribution to the life and mission of the Church in Australia, and the bishops and leaders of religious institutes thank those responsible for its preparation and delivery,” Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge said.

CRA president Br Peter Carroll FMS added: “As leaders in the Catholic Church responsible for hundreds of Church entities, CRA and the Bishops Conference are working through numerous governance reforms and practices as outlined by the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

“I am hopeful that *The Light from the Southern Cross* will illumine a future path of contemporary good governance for the Church in Australia, and possibly beyond.”

An earlier version of the report was provided to the Bishops Conference and CRA in May. The bishops noted at the time that a number of errors would need to be corrected and some clarifications made before the report was released. The bishops took on the task of providing feedback to inform those corrections and clarifications.

Before the feedback was provided or incorporated, the earlier version of the report – marked confidential – was leaked to international Catholic media and published online. The work of finalising the report has continued. *The Light from the Southern Cross* is released today in its final form.

Archbishop Coleridge said the bishops have previously asked that any feedback on the final version of the report be sent to the local bishop in each place, who will bring it to the Bishops Conference’s discussions at November’s plenary meeting.

“The bishops will discuss the report and the broader issue of governance at our meeting later this year, but many of the matters raised are ones that can be implemented at the local level, rather than requiring national consensus,” he said.

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“Equally, many of the issues will be best considered during the upcoming Plenary Council and what will follow from the Council in each diocese.

“I encourage anyone who wishes to read *The Light from the Southern Cross* to start with the accompanying reading guide, also published today, and read the whole report, rather than just the recommendations.”

The publication of *The Light from the Southern Cross* brings to completion one of the IAG’s final projects, prior to concluding its service at the end of 2020.

“The IAG has ably assisted the Church in Australia respond in a credible way to recommendations of the Royal Commission,” Br Peter said.

*The Light from the Southern Cross* and the associated reading guide can be found on the Bishops Conference website and the CRA website.

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