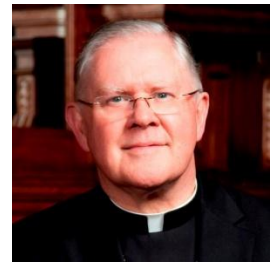


## **MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP MARK COLERIDGE**



### **RE: ROYAL COMMISSION'S FINAL HEARINGS INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Dear sisters and brothers,

We've come to the second week of the Royal Commission's Catholic wrap-up where the focus has been on seminary training, the ongoing formation and support of clergy and the culture and practices of our agencies – education and social welfare in particular. The week had its ups and downs, but on balance it was positive. It offered a picture of the Church in action today, with the presence of some strong lay leaders who impressed with their command of the issues and their commitment to the Church. They and many like them are a source of real hope for the future.

It became clear that efforts have been made to strengthen and improve seminary training, including the screening of candidates. But it was also clear that we still have a long way to go in that area and that there are real inconsistencies between seminaries around the country. Perhaps we have too many seminaries, perhaps the seminary is no longer the privileged place for training that it has been. We also have a long way to go in the area of clergy support and supervision and lifelong training, and here we may need to learn from other walks of life where professional supervision and lifelong training are required and where sanctions apply if the requirements are not met. We have talked about this for a long time, but this week suggests we now need to act. The Royal Commission may help us work how best to act.

We look now to the third and final week when we will consider again what's happening now and what needs to happen in the future. Important questions of Church culture that have emerged in the first two weeks will be explored further, and the Royal Commission will seek to hone the more practical proposals that are likely to come from its long and complex work. Many of you have said that you are praying for me and all involved in the final hearing. That's a crucial part of the mix that will never be found in a Royal Commission transcript but without which our full story cannot be told. The Royal Commission doesn't do God but we do. Grace and peace to you all in Jesus Christ.

+Mark Coleridge