



OFFICE OF
BISHOP WILLIAM WRIGHT

STATEMENT BY BISHOP BILL WRIGHT
Cardinal George Pell's Conviction and Appeal

It is now public knowledge that Cardinal Pell has been convicted on five charges relating to sexual abuse of minors, concerning two people who were boys at the time of the alleged offences, one living and one now dead. The matter has become public because a second trial, on other offences, has been abandoned, removing the risk of the present verdict influencing another jury's thinking.

Whenever matters like these are in the news, it can be a difficult time for those who have memories of their own abuse to deal with. So I think first of them and remind them and their families that the Healing and Support team of Zimmerman Services is available if they need personal support at this time. You can contact Zimmerman Services on 4979 1390.

Secondly, I want to express again my confidence in our legal system and, specifically, in trial by jury. I think that the present case confirms that juries generally are diligent and responsible. Clearly the two juries concerned have found this a difficult matter. The first time the Cardinal was tried, the jury could not reach a verdict, then at the re-trial a new jury took over three days to agree on the verdicts now delivered. They took their duty seriously.

The Cardinal has appealed against his convictions, which is consistent with his having always maintained his innocence. The appeal will be heard by three judges. This, too, is an important element of our legal process, and we should await its outcome and be prepared to accept its rulings.

To end, recalling again that child sexual abuse is not only a serious crime but also a morally repugnant and sickening act that often has devastating and long-lasting effects on its victims, I renew my commitment as Bishop to ensuring the safety of children in our diocese, to co-operating with civil authorities in bringing offenders to justice, and to hearing and responding to victims and survivors to the best of our wisdom and ability to help.

Most Reverend William Wright
Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle

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