

Concerned Catholics NEWS

Chair's Report

May 2020

Dear friends

Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn is now in its fourth year. I am writing this as the Australian Catholics Bishops conference has just completed its week-long May meeting. The ACBC is gathering in the aftermath of the High Court's unanimous decision to free Cardinal George Pell, but public attention to the church's role in perpetrating institutional child sexual abuse continues unabated with the release of previously redacted findings by the Royal Commission into the Ballarat Diocese and the Melbourne Archdiocese.

The big items on the agenda of the ACBC included the future plans for the Plenary Council 2020 and the report of the church's Governance Review, on which I have served for nearly 18 months. Expect more from me on that productive experience at a later date. The bishops also had before them agenda papers for the PC2020 and an Open Communique from 15 member groups of the Australian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform, including Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn, on the future of the church in Australia. Please help to spread this communique far and wide to family, friends, parish members and colleagues.

The pandemic threatens to interrupt the momentum towards church renewal. We must work even harder to spread our message in order to prevent other issues taking precedence within the church. We need to track PC2020 developments and to keep bishops and other church leaders on their toes. Many of them need encouragement from us to be brave enough to embrace necessary church reforms, including inclusiveness, accountability and transparency at parish and diocesan levels.

Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn has fresh plans for July-December this year. You will hear from us soon about them. These include building our capacity, such as a refresh of our website so that we can communicate better. Why not make a habit of looking once a week at the website for the latest postings, under 'Further Reading'. We plan to run online events, using Zoom and webinars, in place of face to face public forums which almost certainly won't resume this year because of safety concerns.

Take care and stay safe.

John Warhurst