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Bishop of Parramatta

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Dear friends and colleagues in ministry,

In recent years there has been focus on the governance and structure of the Catholic Church in Australia. This focus has been a lightning rod and at times, an uncomfortable and challenging focus on how we operate as Church.

Following the conclusion of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse and our Diocesan pastoral plan, *Faith in Our Future: Pastoral Plan for the Catholic Diocese of Parramatta 2014 – 2018*, I have sought advice on how we can best respond to these challenges.

To ensure we are operating with the correct structures and the right governance that is accountable to the people we serve in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains, I am commissioning a governance review of the decision-making and advisory bodies that currently provide the structures and processes for the governance and administration of the Diocese of Parramatta.

The review will be led by Adjunct Professor Susan Pascoe AM with the support of Adjunct Professor Murray Baird.

Their work will cover all the key decision-making and advisory bodies of the Diocese of Parramatta. They will look at and review the various bodies, committees and councils that govern our Diocese. In their work, they will analyse the founding documents of those various bodies, interview people in key roles and review the mission, purpose, and values of each body.

This scope of work will also include, but not be limited to, looking at the governance and management structures of the Diocese and our parishes. The work will cover accountability, transparency, synodality, and the attainment of clerical and secular participation and co-responsibility in the decision-making processes of the Diocese.

The final report will be delivered to me by 19 December 2020.

I pray for the intercession of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, our Diocesan patron, as we embark on this important work in reviewing our Diocesan governance and structures.

Yours fraternally in Christ,

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