

Diocese of Parramatta releases ‘unprecedented’ report on Church governance

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The review of governance was a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and *The Light from the Southern Cross* report.

Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta, on 26 March, released a governance report that he described as “unprecedented in scope and importance” during a small ceremony to mark the historic event.

The report, *Review of Governance for the Diocese of Parramatta June 2020 – February 2021*, was tasked with looking at the “civil and ecclesial governance, strategic planning, and leadership” structures of the Diocese of Parramatta, Bishop Vincent said.

Commissioned by Bishop Vincent in 2020, it was based on the recommendations of two significant reports: the *Final Report* from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and *The Light from the Southern Cross: Promoting Co-responsible Governance of the Catholic Church in Australia*.

These two reports recommended Catholic religious organisations review their “governance of parishes and dioceses in Australia to consider best practice approaches to governance” and “provide insights to improve ecclesial governance practice,” according to the Diocesan governance review.

Susan Pascoe AM and Murray Baird, who conducted the governance review, interviewed more than 75 people and reviewed a multitude of documents and practices relating to civil and canonical structure of the Diocese of Parramatta.

In their findings Susan and Murray said: “Our overarching assessment of ecclesial and civil governance practice in the Diocese of Parramatta is that it is generally excellent, notwithstanding our recommendations for some improvements identified during the independent review. We were impressed with many elements of ecclesial and civil governance in the Diocese and these are contained in the commendations.”

Despite its heavy focus on governance and management structures, Chair of the Diocesan Finance Council Chris Maley said: “The focus of this report is mission front and centre.”

Chair of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Bella Reyes, praised the report and its findings as it found that the existing good governance practices are “balance[ing] the need of a multitude of groups”.

The recommendations will be studied and progressively implemented in the coming months. †

Joseph Younes is the Head of Communications in the Diocese of Parramatta.



Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta with Murray Baird and Susan Pascoe.

Image: Diocese of Parramatta.

Access the report at parracatholic.org/resources.



Watch the release of the report here youtube.com/watch?v=BX4n1hGiTII

