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Dear People of the Diocese,

You may have seen media coverage following a recent judgement of the High Court of Australia that involved the Diocese of Ballarat. This judgement has prompted renewed discussion about liability. I appreciate people's concern for those who have suffered abuse and people's questions about organisations accepting responsibility. I offer the following notes in response to people's concern and questions.

In cases where there is evidence that the Diocese of Ballarat has been negligent in the duty of safeguarding children, the Diocese accepts liability and provides compensation to victims.

In the case considered by the High Court, Victorian courts had found that the Diocese of Ballarat was not negligent but still held that the Diocese was liable - vicariously. The High Court set aside this decision of the Victorian courts.

I would like to make it clear that the Diocese of Ballarat will continue to accept liability and provide compensation in cases where there is evidence that the Diocese has been negligent in safeguarding. In addition, the Diocese will continue to provide compensation through the Federal Government's Redress Scheme and through the state-wide Church process called Pathways Victoria. As well as providing compensation in these ways, the Diocese will continue to provide assistance to those who have suffered abuse by funding counselling and other pastoral help.

God bless you all.

Bishop Paul