



22 October 2024

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Six years ago, on 22 October 2018, the then Prime Minister of Australia delivered the National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse in the Parliament of Australia. His words remain pertinent:

*“For too many years our eyes and hearts were closed to the truths we were told by children. For too many years governments and institutions refused to acknowledge the darkness that lay within our community. Today, we say we are sorry. Sorry that you were not protected, sorry that you were not listened to. We are sorry for refusing to trust the words of children, for not believing you. As we say sorry, we also say we believe you. We say what happened was not your fault.”*

As an institution which has experienced the darkness of abuse present in our communities, we can never sufficiently apologise. We acknowledge the enduring hurt felt by victim-survivors. As Bishop of Broken Bay, I once again acknowledge the harm caused to those entrusted to our care and say sorry.

Our Diocesan crest is that of the Barrenjoey lighthouse, which overlooks Broken Bay. We read in scripture “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it” (John 1:5). As a Diocese, we pray to have our eyes, and our hearts open to Christ our Light; a light that brings forth truth and shines in the deepest recesses of whatever darkness.

In the coming days, the outcomes of our first external audit of our application of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards will be published. It will demonstrate how we have implemented and embedded actions in the Diocese of Broken Bay to ensure our communities are places of safety and care. For today, we pray for forgiveness and healing when they have not been.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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