

STATEMENT FROM CARDINAL GEORGE PELL

7 May 2020

Cardinal Pell said he was surprised by some of the views of the Royal Commission about his actions . These views are not supported by evidence.

He is especially surprised by the statements in the report about the earlier transfers of Gerald Ridsdale discussed by the Ballarat Diocesan Consultors in 1977 and 82.

The Consultors who gave evidence on the meetings in 1977 and 1982 either said they did not learn of Ridsdale's offending against children until much later or they had no recollection of what was discussed. None said they were made aware of Ridsdale's offending at these meetings.

The then Fr Pell left the Diocese of Ballarat and therefore his position as a consultor at the end of 1984.

As an Auxiliary Bishop in Melbourne 1987-96, Bishop Pell met with a delegation from Doveton Parish in 1989 which did not mention sexual assaults and did not ask for Searson's removal.

Appointed Archbishop of Melbourne on 16 August 1996, Archbishop Pell placed Fr Searson on administrative leave in March 1997 and removed him from the parish on 15 May 1997.

ENDS