

Statement from Fr Hans Zollner SJ during his visit to Australia

Date: Friday 3 February 2023

Father Hans Zollner SJ, Director of the Institute of Anthropology, Interdisciplinary Studies on Human Dignity and Care (IADC) at Pontifical Gregorian University said his latest visit to Australia has been an encouraging opportunity to strengthen the global network of individuals committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable people from abuse.

“During this visit I've been meeting with several leaders across various sectors to promote discussion about how the Church and community together can address the issues of child abuse and protect those most vulnerable.

“The upcoming start of the school year has renewed discussions about what needs to be done to safeguard children in the community.

“These discussions are important in order to go beyond acknowledging what has happened, and take concrete steps to prevent further abuse, intervene, and talk about how we all can address this critical issue,” said Father Zollner.

With his time split across Melbourne and Sydney, Father Zollner has planned meetings with:

- **Julie Inman Grant**, e-Safety Commissioner
- **Lianna Buchanan**, Victorian Commissioner for Children & Young People
- **Chiara Porro**, Australian Ambassador to the Holy See
- **Steve Kinmond OAM**, Children's Guardian – NSW Office of the Children's Guardian
- **Professor Daryl Higgins**, Director of the Institute of Child Protection Studies, Australian Catholic University
- Additional support and survival advocacy group.

“Collaboration involves sharing information on good practice and mutual learning among experts and practitioners.

“My meetings across those in e-safety, children's wellbeing and academia is part of this interdisciplinary approach so we can continue learning from each other.

“We must also not forget encounters and meetings with victims and survivors are vital to what we do at the IADC. Our work is informed by their voices.

“The IADC is committed to teaching and research all facets of dignity and care in and intercultural and interdisciplinary way.

“I have no doubt the meetings I am having in Australia with the highly experienced and qualified individuals, who are also committed to serve and protect others, will yield important learnings for the future,” said Father Zollner.

Father Zollner will conclude his 10-day trip to Australia on Saturday 4 February.

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