Church welcomes abuse inquiry

By **ANTONY DUBBER**

THE Administrator of the Canberra/Goulburn Catholic Archdiocese has come out in support of a Royal Commission into child sexual abuse.

Monsignor John Woods is also calling for meaningful recommendations on a possibly long-running inquiry.

He told the *Post* that child abuse was a 'cancer' that needed to be addressed not only in the Catholic Church but across a broad spectrum of society.

Msgr Woods said the Royal Commission could run for a number of years, as was the case in Ireland, when the church there carried out a thorough and all-encompassing investigation which took nine years.

"…I have heard people say the investigation could take anything from two to 10 years," Msgr Woods said.

"But I think time should be secondary to well founded recommendations."

In terms of how the inquest should be carried out, he told the *Post* that most sex offenders were usually known to the families involved, and that this could add a great deal of emotion and heartache to the victims. He believed terms of reference should be broad ranging.

"The breadth of it is addressing this matter across society and it should be responsive to facts on the ground," Msgr Woods said.

"Most paedophiles have either been married, are part of the victim's extended family, or are certainly known to the family.

"This whole Royal Commission should be broad-ranging, and an area of particular focus should be on children who are or were in institutional care."

" No government will ever force me to break the seal of the confessional!'
Letters P8

IN SUPPORT: Administrator of the Canberra/Goulburn Archdiocese, Monsignor John Woods (right) says a Royal Commission into child sex abuse should be broad ranging. He was pictured with retired Canberra/Goulburn Archbishop Francis Carroll in Goulburn last July. **Photo: Louise Thrower.**