



Diocesan e-News

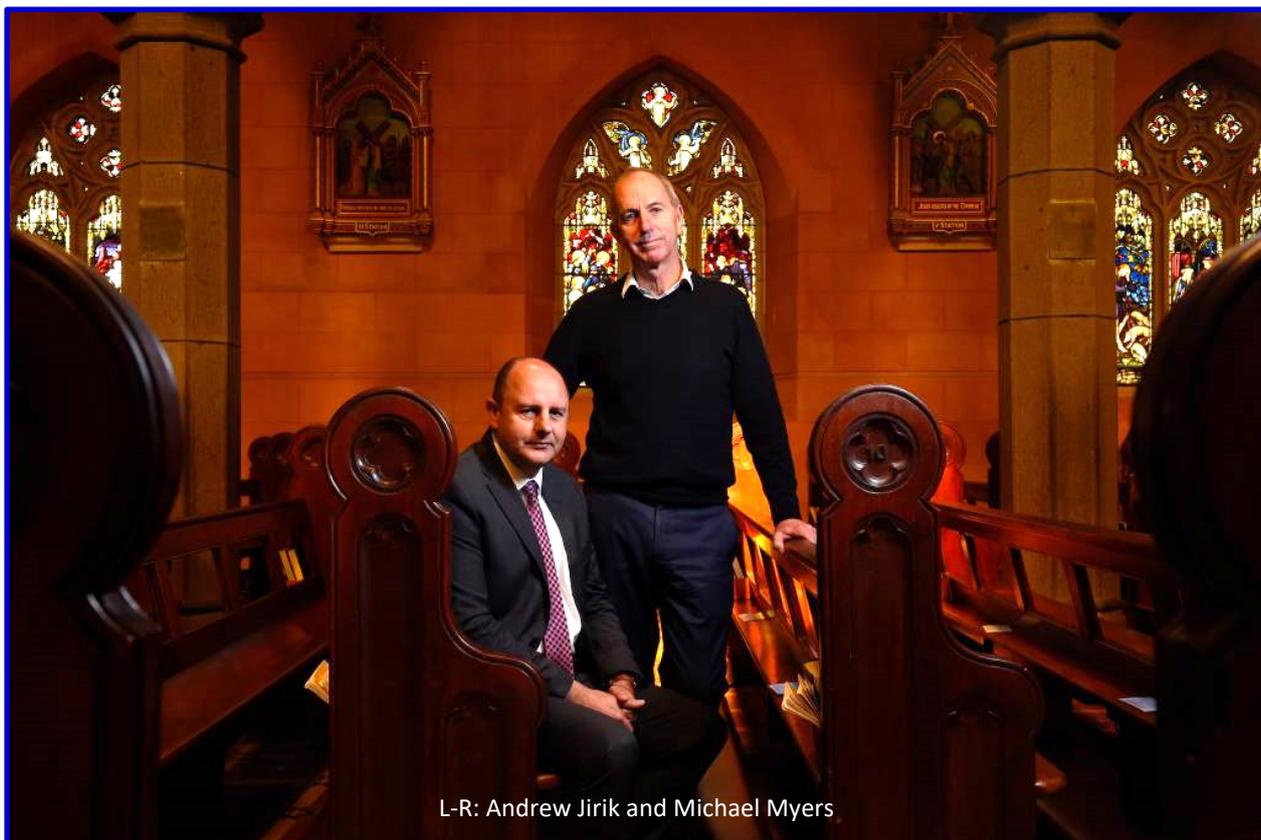
CATHOLIC CHURCH TO DONATE TO CASA

The Catholic Diocese of Ballarat is donating \$300,000 to the Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA), to help the service work with abuse survivors across the city. Earlier this month it was announced the Ballarat branch of CASA will receive \$700,000 in State Government funding as part of a state wide \$5 million commitment over two years.

The church's commitment will see that funding now lift to \$1 million over two years, which it hopes will assist hundreds of people living with the stigma of sexual assault.

Diocesan Business Manager Andrew Jirik said the church had been seeking a way to support CASA. "We've been supporting victims through various avenues, but it was opportune when we recently heard about the funding the state government had given CASA's throughout Victoria, so it was timely to see if we could top that off," Mr Jirik said.

"We contacted CASA and we asked if it was possible for us to make that funding \$1 million. They do some very good work for what is our victims, but for victims more generally"



L-R: Andrew Jirik and Michael Myers

Professional Standards Coordinator Michael Myers said it was incumbent on the church to assist in helping victims of sexual abuse.

"We look to find the best way we can to respond to those abused. This donation provided to CASA will support survivors," Mr Myers said. "It is for all survivors, we don't want to tag this and CASA will be free to use the donation in any way they see fit."

"For survivors the idea of a healing centre is a broad idea for services of men's health however CASA is up and running and it's doing what it needs to do well."

Mr Jirik said there were a number of victims that did not feel comfortable in speaking directly with the church. "There are people out there that certainly don't want to come to us, and from our discussions this funding will go into the GoFundMe account," he said. "That's the beauty of this funding, they do not have to approach the church, it is completely at arms length."

Mr Myers said the church would continue to offer pastoral support and redress which can include a number of initiatives both in counselling and financial support. "The church has for three decades now been attempting to meet the needs of survivors," he said. "It's not to say the church response has been anywhere near perfect, nonetheless the church acknowledges that it has a duty to support survivors of abuse and it is something we are doing to the best of our ability."

Article courtesy of the Ballarat Courier: Text by Greg Gliddon and picture by Adam Trafford