

# THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND DIOCESE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

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27<sup>th</sup> June 2025

## Announcement

To the Faithful of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (**ANZ ROCOR**)

Dear Clergy and Parishioners,

We write to you with heavy heart to make a public statement to acknowledge and unreservedly apologise for crimes of sexual abuse committed by Archimandrite Alexis Rosentool, a priest who served in our community for many years.

On Friday, 20 June 2025, following a criminal trial in the District Court of NSW which commenced on 7 May 2025, a jury found the accused guilty on counts one to five of the indictment and the Crown's detention application was granted by the presiding Judge. Up until this time, a Suppression Order was in place preventing us from naming the offender.

Bail has been revoked and the offender taken into custody by police after a warrant was issued by the Registry. The matter has been stood over for sentencing on 8 August 2025. Following sentencing, the offender may elect to lodge an Intention to Appeal.

The leadership of ANZ ROCOR seeks to state for the record:

1. To the survivors and their families, we offer our deepest, most sincere apology. No words can adequately express our sorrow for the harm caused, nor can they undo the impact done. We specifically apologise for:
  - 1.1 the abuse and profound trauma caused;
  - 1.2 any action or inaction to respond appropriately and mitigate the abuse or trauma caused; and
  - 1.3 the breach of trust and faith this represents to you and the entire community.
2. To the survivors and entire community, we have at all times fully cooperated with all police investigations and legal proceedings which continue. Out of respect for that legal process, we will refrain from commenting further until all appeal rights are concluded.

3. To the entire community, we are committed to taking immediate and ongoing reforms to mitigate such events from being repeated. These include:
  - 3.1 Application of Canon Law and Pastoral Steps to respond to the offender's criminal conduct in the strongest manner available in consultation with our Synod of Bishops, at the appropriate time;
  - 3.2 providing support and counselling resources to survivors and their families;
  - 3.3 reviewing all child protection policies and procedures with independent experts;
  - 3.4 implementing enhanced safeguarding measures and mandatory reporting protocols with independent experts;
  - 3.5 providing ongoing trauma informed training for all clergy, staff and volunteers;
  - 3.6 strengthening safe pathways for reporting concerns; and
  - 3.7 implementing and entering the National Redress Scheme.

We recognise that rebuilding faith and trust in the ANZ ROCOR leadership and community will take time and consistent action to achieve healing. As a leadership group, we are committed to this difficult but necessary work.

For any support and information arising from this statement please contact:

1. National Child Abuse Counselling & Referral Service - 1800 991 099
2. Lifeline - 13 11 14
3. Beyond Blue - 1300 224 636

We will continue to monitor the sentencing and possible appeal by the offender and will correspond with you again in the future.

With pastoral love in Christ,

+ Archbishop George

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