

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

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## 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 refer to our Announcement dated 27 June 2025 and now make a further public statement.

As foreshadowed, sentencing of the offender, Archimandrite Alexis Rosentool (**the Offender**) was delivered by Her Honour Noman J on 8 August 2025 in the Supreme Court. The ANZ ROCOR seek to emphasize some important points made by the Court including:

### 1. **Overview of the case**

The Offender was convicted of five (5) counts of sexual offences against three male victims, all of whom were parishioners at the time of the offences. The offences spanned approximately 20 years and the Offender was involved in suburban parishes in Sydney and then founded a monastery in Bombala.

### 2. **Nature of the offences**

The offending is related to indecent assault upon a male and persistent abuse of a child, involving five (5) counts in total. The Court noted the Offender's abuse of trust and authority as a spiritual leader with some of the offences occurring in the victim's homes and beds.

### 3. **Assessment of seriousness and harm**

The Court assessed the objective seriousness of counts 1-4 fell within "mid-range" and on count 5 "above the notional mid-range". Victim Impact Statements revealed the enduring psychological harm, with victims describing the Offender's significant spiritual influence and the trauma of keeping the abuse secret for decades. The Court was at pains to state that parts of the proceedings were in closed Court to protect the identities of the victims and strict statutory non-publication orders remain in place.

### 4. **Remorse and rehabilitation**

The Offender denied all charges and showed no remorse or acceptance of responsibility. While he cooperated on an agreed facts to streamline the trial, this did not reflect genuine remorse according to the Court. The Court also found there were limited prospects for rehabilitation due to the Offender's continued denial and lack of engagement with support services.

## 5. **Final sentence**

The Offender was convicted on all five (5) counts resulting in an aggregate sentence of 19 years imprisonment (with a non-parole period of 13 years). His sentence is taken to have commenced on 19 June 2025.

## 6. **Appeal by Offender**

We have now been informed by the NSW Police that the Offender has lodged a Notice of Intention to Appeal against his conviction and sentence in the Court of Criminal Appeal. The NSW Police state such appeals are common and the ANZ ROCOR leadership continue to support the proper legal process until the matter is concluded.

In the interim, the ANZ ROCOR leadership state the following:

1. It apologises unreservedly to the victims, who were the subject of the criminal proceedings, for acts of sexual abuse committed by the Offender in his position as a priest and spiritual leader in the community over many years. It also acknowledges the victims' continued anxiety associated with an appeal.
2. It encourages the community as a whole despite the appeal to recognise, appreciate and give suitable weight to the verdict of the jury and sentencing by the Court at first instance after a long and detailed trial involving matters of evidence which have been raised in open and closed sessions of the Court.
3. We pray for healing and restoration of faith for the victims, witnesses and any others who have been impacted by the conduct of the Offender and the religious community at large.
4. We encourage and pray for those who have supported the Offender prior to and subsequent to the verdict and sentencing, to recognise the Court has heard all the evidence and subject to the appeal, justice has not only been done but should manifestly be seen to be done. Once the appeal is heard and determined, we hope this will bring closure and a refocus on truth and faith in Christ.

As outlined in the prior Announcement, the ANZ ROCOR leadership have commenced steps to reform and take remedial action to mitigate such incidents occurring again to rebuild trust in the ANZ ROCOR leadership and community. This will include application of Canon law, pastoral steps and secular assistance from independent experts.

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

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

We will continue to monitor the proceedings and appeal instituted by the Offender.

With pastoral love in Christ

+ Archbishop George