

His Honour
Chief Judge Kidd
County Court
Melbourne.

Your Honour,

I have known Cardinal Pell since the mid 1990's, before he became Archbishop of Melbourne. I met him through my wife who was a friend of his while studying in England and through her family who were his close friends in Melbourne.

I am aware of the serious charges against him and of the jury's verdict in December and his plea of innocence. My comments are offered to the court against that background.

In the family context, where we regularly meet, he is an easy presence—genuinely interested in the personal and professional lives of family members of all generations and a matter of fact advisor when difficulties arise. His manner is warm and humane.

In company, he is informal and forthright, able to laugh at his own and others' foibles. He mixes in a relaxed way with the crowd at sporting events and similar occasions and does not have 'tickets on himself'.

Both in Melbourne and in Sydney my wife and I have maintained a close friendship with him over the years. We meet at home and have been on holidays together.

For my part I have also had more formal dealings with him in supporting University and other tertiary institutions. He has a deep commitment to education and the advancement of young people. Perhaps it is his major concern.

As is to be expected, the public image of an individual in a high office is often at odds with the actual person. For that reason, I think it appropriate to comment on the gap between them. This is especially so where the person has been the subject of great public controversy. In recent times, Cardinal Pell has been in a number of public inquiries including the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry and the Royal Commission. So even before the present matters became subject to the administration of justice, he was the subject of intense criticism.

I raise this because, whatever the merits of that debate, his responses to it provide an insight into his character. Throughout these public events, he has never in my company spoken ill of, or with bitterness against, those who have made accusations against him. I think it says much of him as a person that he has always demonstrated good will towards them, even in circumstances in which a formal examination of the allegations showed them to be without merit.

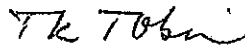
Because of the public perception, I should say something of his public and private response to abuse in general. I was made aware of it in 1996 when, in Melbourne, he took the first steps of any major institution to investigate and compensate the victims. In doing so he was supported by senior figures in government, the police and judiciary. He continued that work in Sydney.

I can say that privately he has genuine compassion for the suffering of victims of abuse and an understanding of the lasting damage it does. I believe he has remained true to that.

When he took up his post in Rome some years ago, we saw less of him. But I don't think in those years he changed. When the present charges were first laid, Pope Francis commented publicly that, in his work in Rome, he found the Cardinal to be an honest man.

In the years I have known him, before and since, I also have known him to be an honest man.

Your faithfully,



T.K. Tobin QC

His Honour Chief Judge Kidd
County Court of Victoria
Melbourne

Dear Sir,

I have known Cardinal George Pell since soon after he became the Archbishop of Sydney. I am aware of the charges that have been brought against him, and I am aware that he has been found guilty. I am also aware that he continues to maintain his innocence.

I have known him in my role as one of the facilitators of "David's Place" , a place for prayer and spirituality for marginalised people and those who wish to share community with them. Many of our people have experienced homelessness, and have intellectual disabilities or live with mental illness. Cardinal Pell first came to us to say Mass and have lunch when one of our people, in a manic phase, invited him. I never expected him to be interested in visiting us so I rang his secretary to check it out. Her reply was "When do you want him to come?" I had never met a bishop before. On that first visit, he was a lot more comfortable than we expected - I have a photo of him sitting on a milk crate eating a sausage sandwich and talking with a very marginal woman. I walked him to his car afterwards and he said he would like to make the visit an annual event. Cardinal Pell came every year that he was in Sydney. We celebrated his birthday each year and he shared the event with whoever else had a birthday round about then. He maintained his connection with us when he was in Rome, making sure that when we had to move to new premises the archdiocese was looking after us. He also continued his correspondence with a mentally ill lady who wrote to him often about her problems. Our people really missed him when he went to Rome. On one occasion the Cardinal obtained a Papal Blessing for one of our community members for his 80th birthday. This became the man's most precious possession.

When he retires I would love to have the Cardinal work with us at David's Place. He thinks he is no good at street work, but he relates to our people so naturally, remembers their names and enquires after their concerns. He doesn't mind people calling out things like, " George' hey George! Look at this! " as happened once. When a visitor to his annual Mass once objected to the presence of a dog in church, he said to leave it alone as he didn't mind. I always found Cardinal Pell open and friendly. A distant relative of his whom I knew through a church group said once that he used to comment at family gatherings about how much he was looking forward to seeing everyone at our place again.
Dated : 25 February 2019.

Sue Buckingham

21 February 2019

His Honour Chief judge Kidd

County Court

Melbourne

Your Honour,

I write regarding His Eminence George Cardinal Pell. I am aware of the Jury's conviction of the cardinal and of the further charges before the court. I am also aware that Cardinal Pell maintains his innocence of all the charges and I would like to provide a picture of the man that I know him to be.

My family and I have had a very close personal relationship with the cardinal for nearly 30 years. He has had a very positive relationship with each of our children, spent a lot of time in our home and been a part of many of our extended family gatherings. Our children's cousins and many of their friends have got to know him over this time and have really enjoyed his company and felt very strongly the interest and encouragement he consistently shows to young people – whether it be about football or rowing, politics, their studies at the time, their ambitions or their travel experiences.

Cardinal Pell has stayed with me and my husband during the many weeks of legal proceedings both this year and last. Our house is a busy family home with a daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter also living with us and other children and grandchildren living nearby. The cardinal enjoys our simple, busy family life, loves spending time with the children and has been an enormous support to us during some very hard times, even in the midst of his own difficulties.

Towards the end of his first trial, our daughter gave birth. The baby was very sick and was transferred to a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at another hospital. Cardinal Pell was very supportive, visiting the hospital, spending time listening, talking and offering understanding and reassurance to us all.

At around the same time, my 51 year old sister was also very sick. Cardinal Pell spent time with her, talking about the terribly difficult subjects of suffering and dying and I know she was very comforted by his words and his care. When my sister died, on 20 January this year, I was very grateful that he had been able to offer her such comfort. He is a very kind man, full of compassion and generous in providing support to those who need it.

Our three children, aged in their thirties, all have close and very warm relationships with the cardinal. They have, over the years, had a lot of fun with him, enjoyed robust discussions on many topics and sought advice from him on a multitude of matters. When our son and his non-Christian wife had their first baby, Cardinal Pell proactively reminded our son that the baby had another religion and heritage by birthright and he encouraged him to always remember that and to celebrate

and be proud of that heritage. It is very clear to me that he sees the individual and the nuances and complications of their life and is supportive and understanding of those differences.

Over the years of our friendship I have been well aware of the portrayal of Cardinal Pell in the media and it is a far cry from my experience of him. I have experienced, over and over again, the kindness, warmth, empathy and openness of a man who very much feels for people and appreciates their struggles.

I have observed his relationship with many of his other long-time friends and especially with his family. Cardinal Pell has a warm and loving relationship with his family, about whom he cares deeply. His family have holidayed together for many years, celebrated together and have supported one another in all sorts of adversity. He is particularly close to his nieces and nephews, all of whom he sees often and all of whom love him. His brother, sister, sister-in-law, nieces and nephews have visited him at our home over the past months, sometimes enjoying a meal with us and often taking him out or to their homes.

The cardinal is a very loyal friend. He has maintained friendships with people from his early days as a priest in country Victoria and with their children and extended families. There are also many young people who met Cardinal Pell as a young priest, when he was chaplain at their schools, and have maintained very warm friendships with him which have endured across many years. My brother-in-law, Richard Hayden, is one such man. Coached in junior football by a young Father Pell, Richard enjoyed his company, felt encouraged by him, stayed in touch with him as he grew older and ended up asking the cardinal to officiate at his wedding.

Living with Cardinal Pell for so much of the past 8 months, driving him to and from court and sitting in support of him on many occasions, I have come to know him on a much more day-to-day level. It has been very easy having him live with us – his needs are very simple, he is completely humble and undemanding and he is very grateful for any kindness or help at all.

I don't even recognize the George Pell who is portrayed in the media, but the kind, genuinely interested, loyal, humble man I know has my full support.

Yours faithfully,

Anne McFarlane

His Honour Chief Judge Kidd

County Court, Melbourne.

21 February 2019

Dear Judge Kidd,

Character reference for Cardinal George Pell

I write to you in support of Cardinal George Pell whom I have known for over 40 years and known closely for over three decades. He is a relative and a cousin on my mother's side. I have also been in court during his various hearings and trials and I am aware of the latest verdict. I have driven him to and from court on many occasions. There have been many hours of discussions these past months.

He is well known to my family and all of my nine children and has spent much family time with us over the years. He has been especially supportive of my children with the time and advice he has given them and particularly so as they have negotiated various challenges and embarked upon their chosen endeavours as young adults. Indeed he has always made it a point to do whatever he can to encourage all young people he meets in their aspirations whatever those may be.

I know George Pell to be a man who is always on the lookout to assist those in need and have observed him often to be willing to give of his own resources to assist the less well-off even when those recipients might not be positively disposed towards religion or the Church. He is generous in his support of others and in the hospitality he extends to them but regularly disciplined in what he allows himself. I have observed how he puts others first and recall after one AFL game at the MCG he declined the offer of a family dinner to visit a person in hospital suffering from cancer. He is a man who has always been humble and quiet about the many contributions he has made for the betterment of others.

George Pell is a man who is very stoic and he has pushed himself physically in his later years so as to ensure he is no burden to others. This is especially the case with respect to his family. He has also strived to insulate both his brother's family and his sister from the difficulties which have come as a result of his various contributions defending Church teaching, within broader public debates and more recently from the media coverage leading up to his legal proceedings. Despite the public persona often portrayed of him, he is a man who feels it deeply when others are hurt or damaged.

Finally, I know Cardinal George Pell is a man of sincere and constant prayer who is aware of both his own limitations and of his utter dependence on the will of God. I hope that these few words will be of some use to Your Honour in your deliberations.

Sincerely,



Chris Meney

His Honour Chief Judge Kidd,
County Court,
Melbourne

24 February 2019

Re Cardinal George Pell

I am aware of the charges against Cardinal Pell and that a jury has returned a conviction in respect of some of those charges.

I also am aware that Cardinal maintains his innocence in respect of all charges.

I have known Cardinal Pell for some twenty-five years. I knew him somewhat when he was Auxiliary Bishop and later Archbishop in Melbourne in the mid-1990's, and as a fellow delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1999. I came to know him very well in my capacity as Vice Chancellor of the Australian Catholic University, from 2008. During this period, Cardinal Pell was successively Archbishop of Sydney and Prefect of the Vatican Secretariat of the Economy.

I should say at the outset that I regard Cardinal Pell as a dear friend. This does not mean, however, that we have not had sharp disagreements, particularly during my early period as Vice Chancellor, when there were widely differing views around the University. What became clear over time, however, was that it was perfectly possible to disagree with Cardinal Pell, for him to respond vigorously, but then to consider and sometimes modify his position, with the relationship continuing not only in good health, but better than before.

I also should say that Cardinal Pell's public presentation does not necessarily match his private persona. Publicly, he is business-like, and can appear gruff and intensely determined. Such a demeanour doubtless allows him to cope with the many difficult issues with which he is presented. Privately, he is a deeply sensitive person: thoughtful; considerate; and notably charitable in respect of the failings of both friends and enemies, though not himself. He has a profound sense of humour, most often expressed at his own expense.

He is most comfortable relating with people, of all ages, origins and backgrounds. He likes to talk to them and listen to their problems and – if he can – assist them in solving them. He loves talking to students, and if at a University event is invariably an engaged and popular figure.

I have experienced this intensely human side of Cardinal Pell's character in my own home, where he is a dear friend not only of myself, and of my wife but of all three of my adult children who are living in Sydney, in their own right and not merely as their parents' children. The fact that they disagree with him on almost everything is not a difficulty: rather it forms the basis for an on-going badinage undertaken without deference or formality.

I have long been aware of the Cardinal's charitable disposition. He worries about and seeks to help elderly priests; people whom age and infirmity have made difficult to manage; marginal families; and entire communities. He encourages the University to pursue its mission to the poor. In 2013, in the lead up to World Youth Day in Brazil, he co-consecrated a Church in a remote part of Peru which had been built by students of the University at the direction of the local community. My students reported to me that he had tears in his eyes.

Cardinal Pell has devoted a considerable amount of his own resources - more, in fact, than is prudent - to charitable causes. The instance I know best is the establishment of the Burke Fund for the benefit of the University, which currently amounts to some \$1.2 million. My understanding is that this amount represents the substantial proportion of the Cardinal's inheritance from his mother. This has been used over many years to fund lectureships and scholarships within the University.

I respectfully offer all these comments to the Court.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Craven', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Professor Greg Craven AO, GCSG

24th February 2019

His Honour Chief Judge
Kidd County Court
Melbourne
Victoria

RE: Character Reference for Cardinal George Pell

My name is Elsie Heiss and I am the former (retired) Coordinator of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry (Sydney Archdiocese). I am an elder of the Aboriginal Community and Catholic Church.

I am aware of the seriousness of this matter for Cardinal Pell and the Court and the consequences that are attached to the verdict.

I first met Cardinal Pell in 1998 at the Synod of Oceania in Rome. Further I was part of the Opening and Welcome Mass in Sydney for his appointment to Archbishop of Sydney in 2001.

Over the years in my dealings with Cardinal Pell, he has always been supportive of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and myself. In each of my workings with Cardinal Pell he listened to the needs of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and responded accordingly. Cardinal Pell's humility was displayed when he said Mass at the Reconciliation Church and in any number of dealings where he quietly helped the Aboriginal Catholics of Sydney with both moral and financial support.

If you would like to confirm any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me on '

Yours Sincerely
Elsie Heiss

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elsie Heiss', is written over a rectangular area with a textured, grey background.

Former (retired) Coordinator Aboriginal Catholic Ministry
Sydney Archdiocese

24 February 2019

His Honour
Chief Judge Kidd
County Court
Melbourne

Your Honour,

Character Reference - Cardinal George Pell

This character reference for Cardinal George Pell is provided with the knowledge of the charges he faced in the County Court in 2018, and of his conviction on those charges at the end of that year. I am also aware that Cardinal Pell maintains his innocence in relation to these charges. My comments are based on my personal knowledge of him over four decades, including seventeen years working closely with him during his time as Archbishop of Melbourne and Archbishop of Sydney.

I have known Cardinal Pell since 1980. At that time I was a boarder in Year 10 at St Patrick's College, Ballarat. I came in regular contact with him through a friend at school who was part of a rowing crew which the-then Father Pell coached. We shared an interest in books and ideas and talking, which was an interest we had in common with Fr Pell, and we would often visit him at his home across the street from school, either together or by ourselves. At the time Fr Pell lived with the retired bishop of Ballarat, Bishop O'Collins, in his residence. Bishop O'Collins was of advanced years and physically well, but his mental capacities were slipping. Together with the bishop's housekeeper, Mrs Nugent, Fr Pell was in effect one of Bishop O'Collins' carers. I noticed at that time how considerate and thoughtful Fr Pell was to Mrs Nugent, and how much he looked after her as well. When Bishop O'Collins died and Fr Pell moved to Bungaree parish he asked Mrs Nugent to join him there as housekeeper, and she spent the last few years before her retirement with him. He kept in contact with Mrs Nugent afterwards, visiting her when he was in Ballarat and ensuring she was invited to events and special occasions in which he was involved. My recollection is that he was a bishop in Melbourne when she died, and he went back to Ballarat to lead her funeral.

This small, unremarkable story stands out for me now as one of the first of countless instances of simple kindness and care that I have been privileged to witness directly, or to learn about at first hand, over the many years in which I have known Cardinal Pell. There are common features to these stories: an unaffected and genuine interest in people whatever their circumstances; a willingness to go out of his way to look after people; and his gratitude to people for their friendship and support — which continues to be more important to him than any high office he has held.

For my school friend and me, our visits and the discussions we had with Fr Pell were one of the highlights of our years at school. They typically took place during an afternoon on the weekend, and sometimes in our final year of school, in the evenings after study. Despite the many responsibilities Fr Pell had even then, he was always generous with his time. The books and journals he lent us and not least our conversations with him opened up whole new worlds for us. The good-natured interest he took in us as a couple of bookish teenagers was typical of the interest he took in people generally. In part, this a reflection of his gregarious nature, but most importantly of his deep kindness. His interest in people naturally extended to families and young people, and whether as a pastor, a sports coach or as a teacher or lecturer, his involvement with young people was characterised by a willingness to listen, a great sense of humour and fun, and the simple kindness of encouraging people, whether it be in the development of their gifts or in working through difficulties. These are

among the qualities that have led many people who knew him when they were young, or who know him and are still young, to be deeply attached to him.

I kept in contact with Fr Pell in the years after I left school in 1982, while he was still in Ballarat and after he was Melbourne-based from 1985 as well, seeing him several times over the course of each year. He was the celebrant when my wife and I married in 1994 and he is godfather to my eldest child, who is now 23. Our four children have grown up with him as a regular visitor to our home, always over a meal. Conversation ranges widely from serious matters to nonsense and arguments with much laughter. It says something about Cardinal Pell's personal qualities and his company that, even as children and teenagers, they would want to stay at table long after the meal had finished to continue talking with him or to listen to the conversation.

Cardinal Pell was appointed Archbishop of Melbourne in 1996, and he asked me to join his staff as his private secretary. I took up this role at the beginning of 1997. In 2001 he was appointed Archbishop of Sydney, and he asked me to continue in this role there. My work with him continued until his departure for Rome in March 2014 to take up his current position as Prefect of the Secretariat for the Economy. As private secretary to Cardinal Pell, I worked very closely with him for seventeen years. There are a small number of people who worked closely with him as senior administrators and advisers when he was archbishop either of Melbourne or Sydney. However, it would be accurate to say that I am the only one of these people who has worked with him at that level for almost the full duration of his time as an archbishop in Australia.

My years working with Cardinal Pell have been one of the greatest blessings of my life. There was a lot to learn in commencing a role like this, and while always making his expectations and objectives clear, he gave me plenty of space to find my feet and to make the job my own. He was patient and willing to make allowances when mistakes inevitably occurred, providing advice and direction to help me correct course as required. In the first couple of years while working for him, he provided continual practical support to enable me to conclude my doctoral studies, and as the graduation ceremony approached he insisted on buying the academic robes for me. In its small way, this is emblematic of the generosity that he has extended to so many people throughout his life. He is always ready to pay a bill for someone who needs a hand or to give them some cash from his wallet. He understands financial responsibility and takes this most seriously, as his appointment by Pope Francis in 2014 clearly attests. Personally, however, he is quite detached from money and the things that often go with it, much more preferring to use his own funds to help or encourage people.

As archbishop, it was a priority for Cardinal Pell to look after the people entrusted to him. In Melbourne and Sydney he instituted a number of initiatives to support the health and well being of his priests, and to ensure good care of them in their retirement. He was a generous employer to staff, supporting them in meeting family responsibilities and in illness. I suffered a serious illness in 2011 which significantly reduced my mobility and my capacity for work. My reduced workload was never a problem to him, and he made arrangements to support me in working to the extent that I felt I was able. He was very concerned for me, and was regularly asking people to keep me in their prayers. With me and with other staff he was always courteous and respectful, even under circumstances of enormous pressure. He is not a man to lose his temper or to take out anger or vexation on his subordinates or other people. While obviously someone who knows his own mind, he encouraged his advisers to offer him frank counsel and to be willing to argue it through with him in discussion. He was willing to listen to them and be persuaded as appropriate. For all these reasons, people enjoyed working with him, even in the midst of the extremely demanding situations that often arose during these years.

Among other groups of people for whom he was particularly concerned were young people, prisoners, Indigenous people, the homeless and mentally ill, people suffering from AIDS and HIV and people suffering addictions. In addition to ensuring that the various diocesan agencies working in these areas were well-led and properly resourced — and in a number of cases establishing new agencies or centres to address need in these areas — he would frequently visit people who were struggling. These were typically very no-fuss, informal visits, with no standing on ceremony or office. They might involve celebrating Mass or sharing a meal or simply spending a few hours with people. David's Place, a centre for homeless and street people in Sydney, was one of many places he would visit privately and informally. He would visit prisons in Melbourne and Sydney to celebrate Mass and to spend time with the inmates. He was a regular visitor of the sick at home or in hospital. As a priest and a pastor he is also much appreciated for his gentleness and kindness, not least by young people. He always led the diocesan pilgrimage to World Youth Day, held every two or three years in different places around the world. A number of people on these pilgrimages have told me over the years how popular he was with young pilgrims as a confessor, even to the point of them queueing up to receive the sacrament from him when other confessors were available.

I appreciate that the nature of Cardinal Pell's personal faith is beyond the immediate purview of the court, but I hope it might be of assistance to respectfully offer a few words about this because of the way it goes to his fundamental integrity. It means something to George Pell — everything in fact — to be a Christian. He did not devote his life to being a priest in pursuit of ambition or power, but to serve God by proclaiming the Gospel and by looking after other people, most particularly those who are hurt or struggling. I have been able to watch him do this for many years, and at quite close quarters for seventeen. His faith is a matter of deepest conviction for him and it determines how he lives and acts. He is also a man of prayer, someone who prays for others several times during the course of every day, and who has a grounded and life-giving spirituality. This is not ephemeral. It has enabled him to give hope and help and encouragement to a multitude of people. It has made him one of the best of men.

I am most grateful to the court for the opportunity to provide this reference.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Casey

25 February 2019

His Honour

Chief Judge Kidd

County Court

Melbourne

Your Honour,

This character reference is provided with the full knowledge of the charges Cardinal George Pell faced in the County Court last year, 2018, and of his conviction of those charges.

I have accompanied the Cardinal during his committal hearing, the first and second trial and I am aware he has maintained and continues to maintain his innocence. I am grateful for the opportunity to provide some background for Your Honour based on both my professional and personal association with Cardinal Pell.

Although I was aware Cardinal Pell was made Archbishop of Sydney in 2001, I did not meet him personally until 2007. At this time I was approached by the then Business Manager of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney to manage the international and national broadcast of the World Youth Day coverage of the event to be hosted by the Archdiocese in Sydney in 2008. This approach was based on my three decades plus experience in the media and broadcast industry. I accepted the contracted role which was to run through to the conclusion of this event and subsequent post production deadlines.

During the months leading up to and following the event I came to know Cardinal Pell well. One of the first things I noticed working with him was his keen interest in all aspects of staging this event – which resulted in more people visiting Sydney than for the Olympic Games. The Cardinal's vision and commitment to this event was remarkable. Clearly through his many years as a priest and his senior role in the church the Cardinal had an inspiring vision and mission for the event however he readily admitted to not being an expert in all that was required. He put together a team with specific expertise but was always open and willing to accept advice.

At this time I saw a thoughtful, determined and tireless worker willing to meet some extraordinary challenges. I also experienced his generosity, compassion and humour – all of which he has often been accused of lacking by those who have not had the opportunity to know him. I also saw a man who could mix with VIP's, pilgrims, stagehands, cleaners and drivers. I often saw him seeking out the many volunteers after official events to thank them personally.

At the conclusion of my contract for WYD Cardinal Pell asked if I would join the Archdiocese fulltime and establish a media and communications office. This was certainly not on my agenda but I saw

Cardinal Pell was a person with whom I could work and, hopefully, help achieve long-term results. It was also a decision many of my industry colleagues found perplexing then and completely misguided some years later when cases of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and other institutions were dominant in the public arena.

This was and is an extremely heartbreaking subject and I don't intend to make lengthy comment however I can say I have personally seen the Cardinal's empathy with victims or survivors of abuse and their families. He has met privately with many survivors and also groups and I believe his commitment to eradicating this scourge from the church is profound.

Despite the difficult and challenging times, working with Cardinal Pell has been a very rewarding experience personally.

As a man of deep faith, he really walks the talk but much of what he has done for many individuals and groups struggling to meet the everyday challenges of society goes under the radar, no fanfare. That is how he prefers it to be.

Just one small story I recall is when he asked me to produce a video for a school catering for students with disabilities. The students and families were from all religious backgrounds and were not within the Cardinal's geographic area of responsibility. That didn't matter. The school needed to raise awareness of their very special and successful program which in turn they hoped would assist with fundraising. The video was made and the Cardinal paid for it personally. I know many people who can speak of similar acts of care and compassion and the Cardinal's commitment to health and welfare programs, family support, education initiatives, indigenous projects and victims of sexual abuse.

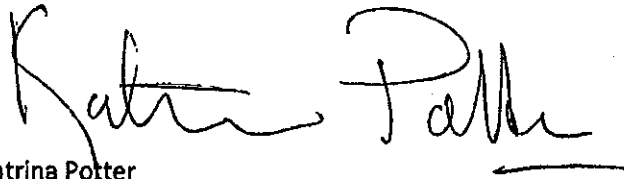
He is a man with an incredible breadth of knowledge but able to talk to international leaders or the struggling and challenged with the same ease and sincerity. I have been with him on several overseas trips - from camel rides in the Middle East to conferences in the Vatican - and can say he is a person who doesn't seek special status or privilege. I have been with him when he has left particularly challenging meetings within the Vatican and walked through St Peter's Square stopping to talk with visitors, pilgrims or students, happy to stop - for a "selfie" or quietly put some euro in the hands of a homeless person.

I have seen Cardinal Pell on numerous times sitting and talking with students or even strangers - comfortably and sharing a joke. He is genuinely interested in those around him and their families. He was always interested in my youngest son's AFL career and would encourage him but add "don't forget the studies". When my husband passed away after a lengthy battle with cancer, Cardinal Pell was in Rome but he was one of the first on the phone. His compassion is genuine and enormously appreciated. Loyalty is often the quality that most goes to truth and I believe Cardinal Pell has this in spades.

I find it difficult to understand how a man who has achieved so much publicly and privately has drawn so much ill feeling. Some have seen him as a polarising figure. I have seen him as a person of great integrity, someone who will not stand on pomp and ceremony to get things done. I see him as a man of a very deep faith who has contributed to scholarship and social challenges alike. He is

selfless, honest and caring. Cardinal Pell once told me he doesn't wear his heart on his sleeve. Perhaps his stoicism has contributed to a perception held by some.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide these thoughts.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katrina Potter". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Katrina Potter

Hon John Howard OM AC

26 February 2019

His Honour Chief Judge Kidd
County Court
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Your Honour

Re George Cardinal Pell

This character reference is provided in the context of charges being dealt with in relation to Cardinal Pell.

I am aware he has been convicted of those charges; that an appeal against the conviction has been lodged and that he maintains his innocence in respect of these charges. None of these matters alter my opinion of the Cardinal.

I have known Cardinal Pell for approximately thirty years. We first became acquainted when he was, I think, an Assistant Bishop in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Inevitably we became better known to each other after he became Archbishop of Melbourne and, later still, Archbishop of Sydney.

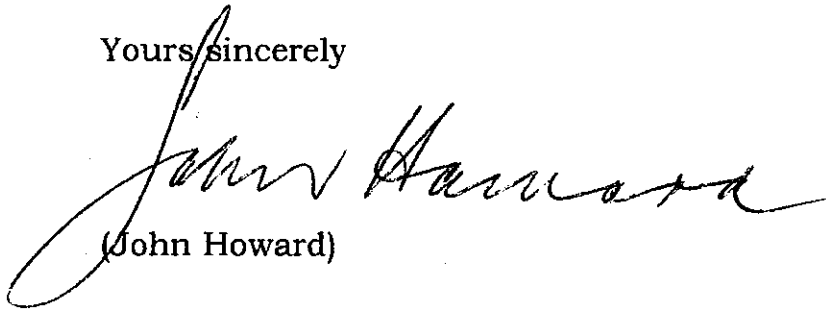
Cardinal Pell is a person of both high intelligence and exemplary character. Strength and sincerity have always been features of his personality. I have always found him to be lacking hypocrisy and cant. In his chosen vocation he has frequently displayed much courage and held to his values and beliefs, irrespective of the prevailing wisdom of the time.

Hon John Howard OM AC

Cardinal Pell is a lively conversationalist who maintains a deep and objective interest in contemporary social and political issues.

It is my view that he has dedicated his life to his nation and his church.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Howard". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'J'.

(John Howard)

February 27, 2019

His Honour Chief Judge Kidd
County Court
Melbourne Victoria

Your Honour,

I am aware, that Cardinal George Pell has been responding to the charges before the Court and of the Jury's conviction. I am also aware that the Cardinal maintains his innocence regarding these matters and I am grateful for the opportunity to provide some text which reflects the character and man that I know and have worked with for many years.

By way of background, I first met Cardinal Pell in 2002 when I was being interviewed for a senior role as the Business Manager and Financial Administrator of the Archdiocese of Sydney. At that time, Cardinal Pell was a recently appointed Archbishop and he was seeking to appoint an experienced lay person to work with him on radically improving business administration, governance, asset management and as well as long term planning. The Cardinal was conscious that we needed to use the resources in a wise and prudent manner – if we managed things well there was more opportunity to do more good works, especially helping the poor and vulnerable.

I was struck by his extraordinary vision and commitment to developing new programs – including programs to support families, the homeless, victims of sexual abuse as well as those suffering from HIV. In addition to this he had plans to propose Sydney as the host for World Youth Day, a major international week-long event involving over 500,000 people from 130 countries.

When I asked why a lay person for the role (it had always been filled by a cleric), he responded without hesitation, explaining that all of this was only possible if we managed our resources in an appropriate and professional way – the skills required were not available if he limited the selection to a cleric. While not a “business” we needed to be “business like”.

I was delighted to accept the role and worked with Cardinal Pell in Sydney from 2003 until 2014. I continued to work with the Cardinal in Rome until October 2016.

Throughout all this time the Cardinal's vision and drive never wavered. His position on the role of clerics versus lay people also never changed – Cardinal Pell is no clericalist, seeking special status or making excuses for clerical misconduct. He sought advice and delegated to many lay staff and advisors to ensure the best outcomes were achieved. He asked all advisors and staff to commit to open and frank exchanges – expressing their view, even if it was a view contrary to that of the Cardinal. He wanted independent free thought, not a group of deferential, meek and passive advisors who would see their role as to politely acquiesce to the thoughts and ideas of a senior Church leader.

Cardinal Pell is a most remarkable man. During our years of working together he became a regular guest in my home – he developed friendships with many of my friends and I have such happy memories of so many warm and entertaining evenings. The public perception of the man is so very different to the lived experience I have had and so very different to the experience of the many friends I have introduced to him over the years.

The Cardinal took a special interest in the academic, sporting and career activities of my children. At one point when one of the most talented players in my son's football team was unavailable to play (as he was being punished by his mother for an untidy room at home), the Cardinal helped me persuade his mother to let him play. We won this important game and I never again heard about an untidy room.

The Cardinal is extraordinarily good company with a wonderful sense of humour and a capacity to engage with people from all walks of life. He cares deeply for the lonely, the suffering and the vulnerable – in actions as well as in prayer.

Soon after I started working in the Archdiocese, I received a call from building security who were concerned as a large group of homeless had entered the building and were insisting that they were there to meet with Cardinal Pell. Anxious to avoid an incident, I went to meet them and encourage them to leave. When the Cardinal was alerted to the situation, he immediately intervened, explaining to me that they were his friends, that he had invited them in to meet him in his office and that morning tea was prepared and waiting for them.

The looks on their faces when they were escorted through our security to meet His Eminence was truly memorable. Indeed, they were his friends. The Cardinal regularly visited this homeless group, choosing to celebrate special occasions (like his birthday) with them rather than fine dining with others. He had indeed asked them to come and see his new office and spend some time with him and his team. True stories like this never get highlighted, partly due to the persistent media attacks on the Cardinal but (in this instance) because the Cardinal wanted this kept private – he did not want this promoted, he did not want to use his friends in this way.

When we moved to Rome to work on the financial reforms with Pope Francis, the personal attributes of the Cardinal remained unchanged. He was never seduced by the trappings of high office and always remained grounded, despite his role and seniority.

Around his apartment the Cardinal was well regarded and warmly greeted. Despite his busy schedule, he would always have time to speak with the usher, the cleaner or the person

begging in the street. He would remember what they had told him previously about any difficulty or worry and regularly checked in to see if things had improved. He always carried some coins to pass to the homeless and rarely walked past any without a greeting and passing on some coins as a way of support. If he had no coins he asked if I could lend him some so that he could pass it on to those in need.

Vatican life and life in Rome are so very different to other parts of the world. It was unusual for a Cardinal to be so natural, humble, down to earth and engaging. Unusual to see a Cardinal walking in normal dress and buying a coffee or a newspaper – and knowing by name the vendor, asking about their spouse or a sick child.

One of the most difficult aspects of life in Rome for the Cardinal (apart from addressing financial impropriety) was being away from his family. The Cardinal is close to his family, especially to his sister Margaret. My wife and I have spent many wonderful times together and often reflect on the special love the two of them have for each other – as well as their sense of humour. The time they spend together reinvigorates both of them – it is delightful to watch.

Having lived overseas, I do understand how challenging to it is to be away from family and friends. It was very hard for the Cardinal to be away from Margaret, especially as her health deteriorated. He suffered it because he felt it was his duty to support Pope Francis in improving the way the Vatican managed its money and resources – if it was done well, then more good could be done around the world.

I also know it was hard for Margaret to have her brother living so far away. A situation made even more difficult when she had to see the public attacks on her brother – on occasions Margaret herself was harassed by media outlets. On many occasions the Cardinal would express his sadness about his family and friends being hurt or directly impacted by attacks about his work or attacks as to his name and reputation. He did not want his family involved. He did not want those dear to him hurt.

Cardinal Pell is an honest and caring man. He has helped many over the years and as significant as his public contribution has been, his private contribution is equally enormous.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide some material. I would be pleased to provide any further information that could be helpful for the Court.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Casey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel Casey,
B.Com M.Ec., CPA, KSG