MEDIA RELEASE – Tuesday, March 17, 2015

STATEMENT FROM ARCHBISHOP PHILIP WILSON

“I am disappointed to have been notified by the NSW Police that it has decided to file a charge in respect of this matter.

The suggestion appears to be that I failed to bring to the attention of police a conversation I am alleged to have had in 1976, when I was a junior priest, that a now deceased priest had abused a child.

From the time this was first brought to my attention last year, I have completely denied the allegation. I intend to vigorously defend my innocence through the judicial system and I have retained Senior Counsel, Mr Ian Temby AO, who will represent me in respect of it.

I am unable to make any further comment at this stage, but I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm my commitment to dealing proactively with the issue of child sexual abuse and the implementation of best-practice child protection measures which I have pioneered since becoming a bishop.

My efforts in this regard have been widely acknowledged, including as a result of evidence I gave to hearings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in NSW and SA.

I would again like to express my deep sorrow for the devastating impact of clerical sex abuse on victims and their families, and I give an assurance that despite this charge, I will continue to do what I can to protect the children in our care in the Archdiocese of Adelaide.

I intend to take some leave to consult with a wide range of people in response to the information I have received today.”