

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Child sexual abuse in schools Royal Commission submission



22 September 2015

National consistent child safety laws and protocols for reporting to police are part of the Truth Justice and Healing Council's recommendations to the Royal Commission's Issues Paper 9: Addressing the risk of child sexual abuse in schools.

Around a third of people who have spoken to the Royal Commission were sexually abused as children in a school with non-government schools accounting for a disproportionately high number of reports.

The Truth Justice and Healing Council submission looks at issues including governance and leadership of schools, teacher training and regulatory frameworks to better protect children.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, said there is a pressing need for consistent legislation relating to schools across the country.

"Schools should be a safe haven for children," Mr Sullivan said.

"But tragically, throughout the course of the Royal Commission, we have seen many failures in schools which have left many young children devastated by physical and sexual abuse.

"In our submission we have called for consistency between requirements for school registration, teacher training and mandatory reporting laws.

"We have also asked the Royal Commission to consider recommending establishing national protocols to define more clearly how schools and police work together when investigating allegations of abuse within the school."

The TJHC, in its submission to the Royal Commission, has also recommended:

- a national Working With Children Check should be implemented as a priority
- national standards through the National Safe Schools Framework should be uniformly adopted
- consistent legislation for government and non-government schools.

The TJHC submission can be found here:

<http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au/media/107157/150918-TJHC-SUBMISSION-Issues-Paper-9-Final-2-.pdf>

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The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's engagement with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: [www.tjhcouncil.org.au](http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au)

For more information on the Royal Commission go to: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>