

MEDIA RELEASE



TJHC CEO talks at Newman College Council dinner about challenges facing Catholic Church

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The CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, Francis Sullivan, gave the keynote address to the Council of Newman College in Melbourne on Wednesday night.

More than 200 parents, students, local clergy and Newman College Council members heard Mr Sullivan talk about the challenges facing the Church as it deals with the many issues being identified by the child sex abuse Royal Commission.

Mr Sullivan spoke about various aspects of the Church's culture which have been identified throughout Royal Commission public hearings as having played a key role in the child sexual abuse crisis that has engulfed the Church.

'Secrecy and silence and an unwritten Church code have protected the reputation of the Church and individuals at the expense of victims,' Mr Sullivan said.

'In the past, as religious leaders and bishops were confronted with allegations and, in some cases, clear evidence of child sexual abuse they acted more like puppets to lawyers and insurance companies.

'Inertia and legal tactics were used as management tools to suppress victims and to protect assets and individuals,' he said.

Mr Sullivan also spoke about the road ahead and plans currently being considered by Church leaders to establish an independent Church body to set, monitor and publicly report on child protection and a range of other internal standards for dioceses and religious orders.

'The religious leaders, as much as anyone else, want to see proper accountability and transparency around these fundamental issues. The new body being considered will introduce a new age of accountability never seen before,' Mr Sullivan said.

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