

MEDIA RELEASE

TJHC in conversation with delegates from Rome



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Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council met with delegates from Rome this week to provide an update on the work of the Council and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse.

Fr Hans Zollner sj is President of the Centre for Child Protection at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and he has an advisory role on the Pontifical Council for the Protection of Minors. Also present at the meeting was Ms Kath McCormack, Australian representative on the Pontifical Council for the Protection of Minors.

Fr Zollner is in Australia for conversations with Church bodies engaged in child protection work and professional standards more broadly.

Mr Sullivan provided some insight into the history of child sex abuse in the Catholic Church in Australia, acknowledging the significant impact of the introduction of *Towards Healing* and more recent changes.

He outlined the Council's reform efforts, including the call for a national redress scheme that will provide a fairer, more transparent approach to compensation for victims of abuse across all Australian institutions and the progress of work on an independent body that will set, monitor and publicly report on standards in the Catholic Church in Australia.

But he said despite recent changes there is still a lot of work to be done.

"There are many issues to be addressed within the Church, some cultural, some systemic," he said.

"As the Council prepares for the Catholic Church final hearing in February next year, we are fine tuning a response to range of factors that may have contributed to the fact that the Catholic Church has accounted for around a third of the Royal Commission's work," Mr Sullivan said.

Fr Zollner provided a brief overview of child sex abuse in other countries, especially the complexities in the developing world, and was interested in how the work of the Council might be used by other countries to model a way forward.

Fr Zollner and Ms McCormack will continue their travels when they head to New Zealand next week.

TJHC Media contact: Michael Salmon 0417 495 018