

MEDIA RELEASE

New independent Catholic Church agency established to set, monitor and report on child and vulnerable adult protection standards



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The Catholic Church has established a new independent agency which will set, audit and report the compliance of diocese and religious orders with child safe and vulnerable adult protection standards.

The new body, Catholic Professional Standards, is a not-for-profit public company limited by guarantee with its own governance structure and board to be made up predominantly of lay professionals.

It will provide, for the first time, a transparent and rigorous process by which the community can determine if a diocese or religious order is fully compliant with both statutory child protection requirements and also standards designed specifically for Catholic bodies such as seminaries and parishes.

Catholic Professional Standards, which is expected to be operating from early 2017, will:

- develop new standards for the protection of children and vulnerable adults across Church entities particularly in areas where there are no current relevant standards;
- audit and report on the compliance of each Church authority against the new professional standards; and
- provide education and training regarding the new standards.

CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, Mr Francis Sullivan, said today's announcement demonstrates the clear willingness of Church leaders to look with fresh eyes at the way the Church ensures children and others are safe in its schools, hospitals, welfare agencies and parishes.

"Today's announcement will see the establishment of an independent body that will allow religious leaders to demonstrate to the community that they have in place best practise child and vulnerable adult protection standards.

"For the first time, through the public disclosure of standards compliance audit reports, the decisions religious leaders make about the way they run their child protection processes will be regularly reviewed.

"This is a revolutionary change within the Catholic Church in Australia which will provide the community with the assurance that Church organisations are as safe as they can be," Mr Sullivan said.

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For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

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

Truth Justice and Healing Council

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