

MEDIA RELEASE

TJHC welcomes new Vatican child sex abuse website



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A new website launched by the Vatican this week detailing its efforts to protect children from sexual abuse by clergy has been welcomed by the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council.

CEO of the TJHC, Mr Francis Sullivan, has said the new site, the official website for the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors, is an important step towards the church being more open and transparent.

The site is designed to share the knowledge and resources the Commission has on safeguarding children and caring for survivors. It is the first time these resources have been published in the one place. It also includes email and phone contact details for the Commission.

"This website will be a one-stop-shop for people wanting to understand how the Vatican and the Pope's child protection commission are working," Mr Sullivan said.

"It signals a shift in the Vatican's approach in communicating its increased focus on the issue of clerical child sex abuse," Mr Sullivan said.

The project coordinator in Rome, Emer McCarthy, said it is important to the Commission that it is as transparent as possible. "Our members want people to know that they are doing their level best to carry out the commission of the Holy Father," she said.

The new website:

- includes a template for local churches around the world to use in establishing their own approach to protecting minors from clerical sex abuse;
- includes guidelines for verifying people's identities when recruiting clergy, employees and volunteers for Catholic church activities, and criminal record checks;
- recommends "full information sharing" when priests are seeking to transfer from one diocese to another;
- reinforces the official Vatican position that, when accusations surface: "the Church will comply with the relevant authority. This should include any civil requirements on mandatory reporting... There should be a clear statement about referral of criminal behavior to the police or relevant authority."

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors was established in 2013 and is headed by Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley. Click here to visit website – www.protectionofminors.va

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The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's response to 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

For more information on the Royal Commission go to:

<http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

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