

MEDIA RELEASE

Royal Commission calls for closer examination of Towards Healing

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Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, has welcomed the Royal Commission's call today for public comment on Towards Healing - the Catholic Church's principles and procedures for responding to complaints of abuse.

Speaking shortly after the release of the Royal Commission's second issues paper, Mr Sullivan said Towards Healing is evidence of the church's professional approach to the scourge of sex abuse.

"Towards Healing has been reviewed a number of times since it was first introduced in 1996," Mr Sullivan said.

"The Towards Healing protocols have radically improved the Church's handling of sex abuse allegations and its treatment of victims of abuse.

"If Towards Healing had been in place prior to the 1990s, we'd have fewer scandals and fewer people would be living with the impact of abuse.

"We welcome this opportunity for further examination of these protocols.

"We will be making a submission and we encourage others to participate in this review.

"Our internal processes have led to adjustments along the way, and we anticipate more will follow as we continue to pursue best practice.

"We encourage people who have been through Towards Healing to tell their story," Mr Sullivan said.

The Truth Justice and Healing Council was established by the Catholic Church to coordinate the Catholic Church response to the Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Its role is to oversee the Church's engagement with the Commission, to develop new policies to protect young people and to ensure the Church responds to any future complaints appropriately with justice, putting the needs of victims first.

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

Media contact: Judith Tokley 0408 824 306 / 02 6234 0908