

The Truth, Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse with a commitment to cooperation, openness and justice for victims and survivors. It has been established in recognition of the importance of the Royal Commission and the imperative for the Church to address the past openly and honestly, the good with the bad.

TRUTH
JUSTICE
HEALING
COUNCIL



Members of the Truth Justice and Healing Council



“ The Royal Commission is to be welcomed as an opportunity for victims to obtain a just hearing, for processes within institutions to be scrutinised, and for the whole community to understand abuse better and find ways forward. The Church in Australia has established a Truth Justice and Healing Council to ensure we cooperate fully with the Royal Commission. ”

The Bishops of NSW

“ The Royal Commission compels our whole-hearted co-operation. The Catholic Church's failings in this respect will be recorded, and victims of abuse will be reassured that there is substance to our apologies. The Commission seeks not only to address the past but also to ensure children are safe in the future. The Catholic Church must be open and comprehensively supportive of the Royal Commission. ”

Most Rev Gerard Hanna, Bishop of Wagga Wagga

“ Along with my brother bishops, I sincerely stand alongside the victims of sex abuse. The pain and anguish of victims continues. The criminal activity of the abusers fills us all with profound sadness and utter contempt. ”

Most Rev Christopher Prowse, Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn

“ In my early days as Bishop of Bathurst, I published an apology to those who had suffered from crimes against minors by priests, religious and other adults in our local church. I now renew that apology and recall again the words of Blessed John Paul II: 'The recognition of past wrongs serves to reawaken our consciences to the compromises of the present, opening the way to conversion for everyone.' ”

Most Rev Michael McKenna, Bishop of Bathurst

What will the Council be doing?

The Truth, Justice and Healing Council has been established by the Catholic Church to help the Church fully embrace the Australian Government's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Council will help the Church deal with the tragic legacy of child sexual abuse and help victims and survivors to be heard and supported.

The Royal Commission is an opportunity for the Church to explain the way it has treated victims and survivors, to acknowledge past wrongs and failings and to find ways in which to work towards justice and healing for all.

Importantly, it is an opportunity for victims and survivors of sexual abuse to come forward and be heard in an environment of support and safety.

The Council will tell the full story of child abuse in the Catholic Church including what has been done to protect children, particularly since the 1990s and the introduction of the reconciliation schemes, Towards Healing and the Melbourne Response.

The Council will also work on developing new policies and procedures to protect young people in the future and to help the Church respond to any future complaints appropriately and justly, putting the needs of victims and survivors first.

Why has the Council been set up?

The Council will be the Church's representative during the Commission process. The Council will assist the Commission by dealing directly with the many different diocesan and religious organisations around Australia from which the Commission may be seeking information on how the Church has dealt with child sexual abuse.

The Council will help the Church and all its dioceses and religious orders cooperate with the Royal Commission by producing evidence and complying with all of the Commission's requests.

Who is on the Council and what are their backgrounds?

The Council is made up of 13 men and women with professional and other expertise in the areas of child sexual abuse, paedophilia, trauma, mental illness, suicide, education, public administration and governance. Ten of the Council members are lay people and four of the Council members have either been abused themselves or have direct family members who have suffered clerical sexual abuse.

Who has established the Council?

The Council has been established by the two overarching Catholic Church organisations, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia which, together, represent dioceses and congregations across Australia.

This is the first time dioceses and religious orders across Australia have authorised a single body to help represent them en masse to any legal body, let alone a Royal Commission.

Who will the Council represent at the Royal Commission?

The Council will represent dioceses and religious orders at the Royal Commission and will be the primary voice and the channel by which the Royal Commission will engage with the whole Church.

Contact Us

Call the Council

To telephone the Truth, Justice and Healing Council, call 02 6234 0900 between 9am and 5pm AEST Monday to Friday.

Write to the Council

Truth Justice and Healing Council
PO Box 4593
Kingston ACT 2604

Or send a fax to: 02 6234 0999

Email

You can email the Council at info@tjhcouncil.org.au

You can also go to our website to subscribe to receive our newsletters, media releases, blogs and other information.

www.tjhcouncil.org.au