

MEDIA RELEASE

Royal Commission announces public hearing into Melbourne Response



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The way in which the Archdiocese of Melbourne has responded to victims of child sexual abuse will be the focus of the next public hearing involving the Catholic Church.

The hearing will commence on Monday 18 August 2014 and is scheduled to run for two weeks.

The public hearing will look into the principles, practices and procedures of the victim's reparation scheme, the Melbourne Response, which was adopted by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne in October 1996.

The hearing will focus on the application of the Melbourne Response in responding to survivors of child sexual abuse as well as allegations of child sexual abuse against personnel of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

It will also look at the experience of people who have engaged in the Melbourne Response process, or otherwise sought redress from the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the TJHC said this latest hearing will see the leadership of the Melbourne Archdiocese explain how the scheme works, its development and its benefits or otherwise for survivors of sexual abuse.

"The Archdiocese will have to explain why they have the Melbourne Response and what it hopes to achieve. The independent operators will have to explain how the scheme operates.

"Survivors of abuse who have been through the scheme will also have an opportunity to tell their stories of abuse to the Commission and also their experience with the Melbourne Response and how they were treated.

"This will be a warts-and-all examination of what is arguably the first institutional redress scheme developed in Australia, perhaps the world, to address clerical child sexual abuse.

"This hearing will be a significant time for survivors of child sexual abuse in Melbourne and also for the Archdiocese of Melbourne," Mr Sullivan said.

The public hearing will be streamed live to the public via webcast on the Royal Commission's website at www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au.

Anyone wishing to be part of the hearing can contact the Commission through its website at <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/public-hearings>

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The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's engagement with 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

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