

MEDIA RELEASE

TJHC CEO visits Holy Family Church in Canberra



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Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, has met with more than 80 parishioners and community members in the Holy Family Church in Canberra's Corpus Christi Parish to talk about the Royal Commission, the work of the Council and the Church's reform agenda.

Mr Sullivan told the meeting about the importance of every day Catholics being heard and letting the Church leadership know they want to see change and reform.

"It will be the voices of Catholics around Australia that will help Church leaders make the reforms needed to ensure children are as safe as possible in Church institutions and that survivors of child sexual abuse within the Church receive justice and are treated fairly," Mr Sullivan said.

"So far the Council has put forward a range of proposals to the Church leadership that all go to improving child protection in our institutions and delivering justice and compassion for survivors of abuses."

Key elements of the Church's reform agenda include:

- Requiring all diocese or religious orders that are the defendants in a child sexual abuse case to identify an entity that is backed by insurance or assets that can be sued;
- the creation of a national redress scheme for survivors, which would be operated by Government but funded by the institutions responsible for the abuse;
- the appointment of lay and independent experts to strengthen the Church's National Committee of Professional Standards
- a proposal for an overarching national approach to safe guarding children within Church institutions

"Just this week we have seen some real movement from the Royal Commission with Justice McClellan outlining his thinking on what a redress framework for sexual abuse survivors would look like.

"He has identified three key elements of the scheme, designed to ensure justice for abuse survivors, which would include an opportunity to receive a meaningful apology, counselling or psychiatric care for as long as needed and a lump sum payment.

"The Church fully supports this approach and has recommended a similar scheme in its recent submission to the Royal Commission on redress for victims," Mr Sullivan said.

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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 TJHCgo to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

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