

MEDIA RELEASE

TJHC welcomes Child Safe Reports



19 August 2016

TJHC welcomes the release this week of two significant pieces of work from the Royal Commission which will contribute further to the safety of children in Australian institutions.

Key Elements of a child-safe organisation will, the Royal Commission says, assist institutions to prevent, identify and improve responses to physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and the neglect of children. [Read the report here.](#)

To complement this work, the Royal Commission has also released a brief publication: *Creating Child Safe Institutions*, which outlines the 10 elements that make an organisation child safe. [Read the elements here.](#)

The main aim of the research was to gain consensus among experts on the key principles, elements and sub-elements of child safe organisations. A majority of the experts consulted considered the proposed elements to be relevant, achievable and reliable, but many raised concerns about how the elements might be implemented, the associated costs (especially for smaller organisations) and the risks associated with implementation.

The Council's recommendations in its response to the Royal Commission's Issues Paper No 3: Child Safe Institutions, are reflected in the Royal Commission's 10 elements. A copy of that submission is available on the [Council's website.](#)

The Council's submission said an essential element in the creation of child safe environments is listening to and responding to children. Respecting the voice of children overcomes the silence and powerlessness that so often characterises unsafe organisations.

The Submission also called for the implementation of consistent, effective and comprehensive child safe practices across institutions, through the establishment of a national, mandatory accreditation scheme, including enforcement and random, independent audits of organisations.

The lack of an independent audit is a major deficiency in current Australian child safe frameworks and limits their adoption and effectiveness.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the TJHC welcomed the forward release of the reports and said the Council looks forward to more detail in the Royal Commission's final report.

"In the meantime, this research will help inform the work of the Catholic Church as it seeks to establish an independent body that will set, monitor and report on standards affecting children and vulnerable people in Church organisations," Mr Sullivan said.

TJHC Media contact: Michael Salmon 0417 495 018