

MEDIA RELEASE

Truth Justice and Healing Council Chair, Barry O'Keefe, dies peacefully in Sydney surrounded by Family



25 April 2014

The Chair of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, the Honourable Barry O'Keefe AM QC, died in Sydney yesterday surrounded by his family.

Mr O'Keefe, a former Commissioner of NSW's Independent Commission against Corruption and former Chief Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, died peacefully at around 8am in St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst.

His family were at his side and he had been receiving friends and taking calls, even dictating letters, in his final days.

Mr O'Keefe was appointed inaugural Chair of the Truth Justice and Healing Council in late 2012 and for the past 18 months has worked tirelessly to chart a path of reform within the Catholic Church as it deals with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The CEO of the TJHC, Francis Sullivan said the passing of Mr O'Keefe is a great loss and he will be missed by his loving family and many friends.

"Barry's formidable intellect, his unflinching courage and commitment, and his profound compassion for the survivors of child sexual abuse within the Church have been the driving force behind the work of the Council since it was established," Mr Sullivan said.

"Barry was an inspiration and friend to all associated with the Council and his leadership will be sorely missed.

"The first question Barry always asked when any issues were being discussed within the Council was 'what is in the best interests of survivors?': this will remain the driving ethos for the Council.

"Barry's passing is a great loss to the Catholic Church and to the survivors of sexual abuse as the Church and the community strives to put in place the best possible protections for children and young people across Australia," Mr Sullivan said.

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