



PO Box 4593
KINGSTON ACT 2604
T 02 6234 0900
F 02 6234 0999
E info@tjhcouncil.org.au
W www.tjhcouncil.org.au

25 September 2015

Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: pminvites@pm.gov.au

Dear Prime Minister

Request for a meeting to discuss the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and redress for child sexual abuse survivors

Congratulations on your appointment as Prime Minister and I would like to fully endorse your recent comment that 'there has never been a more exciting time to be alive than today'.

But unfortunately, and as you would well know, there are some people in our community that might not agree with this proposition. One group who might question your comment and which I am particularly familiar with is the survivors of child sexual abuse.

The Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council has been set up to coordinate the Church's engagement with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and to also drive its reform agenda.

The Catholic Church has been one of the most frequent and high profile organisations to come before the Royal Commission. Its history of child sexual abuse is shameful and its treatment, over many decades, of abuse victims has been appalling.

The Commission recently released its final report into redress for abuse survivors and reforms to civil litigation laws and procedures in child sexual abuse matters.

The Catholic Church is on the record supporting the Commission's recommendations which include an independent redress scheme for abuse survivors to be administered by the Commonwealth but funded by the institutions responsible for the abuse.

Clearly political leadership is required for a national system of redress to be established. The Commission's perspective sees that leadership falling to the Commonwealth. We agree.

Institutional child sexual abuse is a major social issue for our country and we need our governments to address the issue and assist with the implementation of a fair, efficient and effective redress scheme for victims.

In this context may I suggest you consider convening a meeting of all state and territory premiers, chief ministers and their attorney-generals to determine how the nation's law makers will respond to the Commission's redress recommendations.

It is vital that victims, their families and others receive an early signal that their plight will not be ignored and that the work of this Royal Commission will not be in vain.

Our chairperson, the Hon Justice Neville Owen and myself would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this and other associated issues.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Francis Sullivan', written in a cursive style.

Francis Sullivan
Chief Executive
Truth Justice and Healing Council