

MEDIA RELEASE

TJHC CEO delivers wide-ranging speech on challenges for the Catholic Church as it faces the Royal Commission



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Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, has given a wide-ranging speech to more than 100 guests as part of the Australian Catholic University's Blackfriars Lecture Series in Canberra last night.

The speech highlighted what has been learnt about the way in which Catholic Church institutions have responded to allegations of child sexual abuse over the past two and a half years of Royal Commission public hearings.

It also identifies and addresses some of the cultural issues within the Church which may have been factors contributing to the abuse crisis.

"A very difficult yet vitally important challenge for the Church is the extent to which it is prepared to go when asking why this scandal happened and why it has been handled so poorly," Mr Sullivan said.

"Many questions will need to be answered before we can expect to have a truly profound understanding about how the Church's culture impacted on the abuse crisis."

Mr Sullivan said that within a month the Royal Commission will begin case studies focused on the Catholic Church in Melbourne and in Ballarat.

"While the focus of the Commission has been sharply on our Church, we cannot succumb to the inevitable fatigue these hearings bring to the public consciousness.

"The facts are we are at the very centre of the Royal Commission because collectively the Catholic Church is responsible for more abuse than any other institution in Australia, public or private.

"We are the focus because our history of child sexual abuse is shameful, corrosive and complicit," Mr Sullivan said.

Read full speech here:

<http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au/media/108219/151020-ACU-Blackfriars-speech-Francis-Sullivan-CEO-TJHC.pdf>

Media contact: Michael Salmon 0417 495 018

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

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