

MEDIA RELEASE

Catholic Social Services Australia National Conference Canberra



20 October 2015

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, addressed 50 leaders from the national network of Catholic social services in Canberra today saying they provide vital services to many thousands of people across the country.

“The Catholic Church provides more social services than any other non-government organisation in Australia,” he said after the meeting.

“While the Royal Commission is not just about the Catholic Church, the Church accounts for just over a third of the child sexual abuse stories told to the Royal Commission in private sessions.

“It is through organisation in the CSSA network that many abuse survivors will look to find help and assistance as they deal with their ongoing trauma.

“The Church is fortunate to have so many dedicated people in our social services network ready and willing to provide assistance to so many abuse survivors.

Mr Sullivan called on groups like CSSA to encourage collaboration with dioceses and religious orders to look at the stewardship of accountability and transparency and to resource a pastoral response to victims.

“The Catholic Church has provided a system of redress where most other organisations have not, having made payments exceeding \$200 million to date,” he said.

“But we need to brace ourselves for much higher payments in the future.

“Under the proposed national redress scheme, the Catholic Church will be exposed to additional payments of around \$880m to a billion over ten years.

“The impact of those payments will be felt by organisations like social services,” he said.

He also outlined plans for a national body to set, measure and report on child protection standards in the Church and the need for much greater transparency and accountability in this area.

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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:

www.tjhcouncil.org.au