

United call for national CSA redress, Lateline and Easter

Francis Sullivan 21 March 2016

Last week, for the first time, the peak child abuse survivors groups and the Catholic Church, under the banner of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, came together as one voice to call on governments across the nation to get on with national redress.

The collective, made up of Adults Surviving Child Abuse, Care Leavers Australasia Network, Australian Council of Social Service, People with Disability Australia and the TJHC called on the Federal Government to announce its concrete commitment to a National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional childhood sexual abuse.

[A media statement](#), which included logos of all five organisations, made it clear the diverse group is undivided in their support for a national scheme, as recommended by the Royal Commission.

Dr Cathy Kezelman President of ASCA called on all governments to work with institutions to deliver real justice and healing to Australian survivors as a matter of absolute priority.

Leonie Sheedy, from CLAN said the last thing Care Leavers need is another unfair system which does not address their chronically unmet needs.

As I have said many times Australia needs an independent national redress scheme so that regardless of where or when a survivor was abused they have access to consistent, compassionate and generous redress.

Cassandra Goldie from ACOSS said the correct action on this important issue can't be delayed any longer.

The voice from the survivor groups and the Church couldn't be louder.

Together we are asking governments to do the right thing, stick by their commitments to abuse survivors and get on with the job of delivering a fair and reasonable national redress not a half-baked, state-based approach that will, over a few years, devolve into the very mess we currently have.

Lateline last week ran a story calling on all CSA files in the Melbourne Archdiocese and the Vatican to be effectively dumped at the doors of the Royal Commission and made available to the police.

The Church has provided all documents to the Royal Commission at their request. The Royal Commission has not asked for the documents referred to in the *Lateline* report.

Neither the police nor the Commission have issue with not having these files. The Commission has said Catholic Church authorities have responded to all Royal Commission requests for documents including those relating to their interactions with the Vatican.

Victoria Police said it will await the findings and any recommendations of the Royal Commission.

On a different note, I'd just like to acknowledge this Easter season. It's a time of rebirth and renewal in the Christian calendar.

The grace we all pray for is a new way of seeing. An openness to the perspectives of others and the voices of people who have different opinions and beliefs than our own. Many of us are deeply challenged by the revelations coming out of the Royal Commission.

It is my hope that humility and compassion will prevail and that the testimony and suffering of so many people will lead to big changes in this Church of ours.