

# MEDIA RELEASE



## CRA National Assemble fully backs CSA reform agenda

23 June 2016

The CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, Mr Francis Sullivan, addressed the annual Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) National Assembly this week in the Blue Mountains in NSW.

Speaking with the leaders of the more than 180 congregations and religious institutes Mr Sullivan went through the range of initiatives that have been put in place by Church leaders over the past three years to better respond to abuse survivors and to ensure children are safe in Catholic services and facilities.

Mr Sullivan outlined calls from Church leaders for a national, independent redress scheme for abuse survivors, a new structure to develop, monitor and report on child and vulnerable adult safety standards in Catholic organisations and changes to the way in which Church leaders have agreed to deal with civil claims of child sexual abuse.

Mr Sullivan said CRA's unwavering support has been vital to the work of the Truth Justice and Healing Council.

'Many of the religious leaders have been part of the seismic changes the Church has put in place over the last 20 years to better address child sexual abuse cases.

'The establishment of *Towards Healing*, the Encompass treatment program and the Integrity in Ministry protocol have all been driven by religious leaders determined to change the culture within the Church and its organisations. It hasn't been an easy path but it has been essential.'

Mr Sullivan said he found it encouraging that at the Assembly there was an openness and resolve to embrace more change.

'CRA members recognise the need for even more rigorous professional standards and formation. They are working on new guidelines for support and supervision of people living vowed religious life.

'They are establishing best practice church structures for vital ministries in health, education and social services.

'As always the leaders of religious congregations are setting new pathways for the Church in general and pointing to new expressions for the works they have championed for so long,' he said.

The Apostolic Nuncio of Australia, Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana, lay partners and delegates of religious conferences of New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands also attended the three-day Assembly which commenced on 21 June.

This year, invitations to the Assembly were also extended to the representatives of Public Juridic Persons (PJPs) who have canonical and governance responsibility for many Education, Health, Aged Care and Community services formerly conducted by Religious Institutes.

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