

# MEDIA RELEASE



## Children reluctant to speak out about sexual abuse

3 November 2016

Recent research released by the Royal Commission has found children and young people are reluctant to speak out about sexual abuse.

A survey of 1,500 children found one in 10 would not tell anyone if they were sexually abused, this goes up to one in five if the abuser is a peer.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council said young people should and must have a role to play in identifying how organisations need to change the ways they respond to sexual abuse.

"This research has found that many children believe that telling an adult about abuse will only make it worse," he said.

"We have seen this strongly demonstrated in the Commission's recent case study which, in part, deals with child on child abuse and bullying at an exclusive non-denominational school in Sydney.

"The victim was concerned that telling the school about the abuse would result in more abuse, and, as it turned out, in this case it did.

"What we are hearing, however from this research, is that children want grown-ups to pay more attention to what they're saying."

Key findings from the research include:

- One in 10 surveyed said they would not tell anyone if they were sexually abused
- That goes up to one in five if the abuser is a peer
- Many thought telling an adult would only make things worse
- Boys are less likely to speak out than girls
- Two thirds said they would rather confide in a friend or school mate
- 55 per cent would talk to their mother
- 35 per cent would talk to their father
- One in four would seek help from a teacher
- One in 10 said their teachers would not know what to do
- One in three thought their school should be doing more to keep them safe

**TJHC 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](http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au)

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

---

**Truth Justice and Healing Council**

PO Box 4593 KINGSTON ACT 2604 | Tel: +61 2 6234 0900 | Fax: +61 2 6234 0999