

MEDIA RELEASE



TJHC welcomes release of Melbourne Response review and the doubling of compensation limit

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The Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council (TJHC) has welcomed today's announcement from the Archdiocese of Melbourne that it will double the compensation cap available to survivors of child sexual abuse seeking redress through the *Melbourne Response*.

The *Melbourne Response* is a compensation and support scheme established in 1996 to assist people who have been abused sexually, physically or emotionally within the Archdiocese of Melbourne. The compensation cap has now been doubled to \$150,000.

The Archdiocese has also announced it will re-visit past compensation awards adjusting them upwards in cases where survivors would have received a higher offer had the new arrangements been in force at the time their case was heard.

CEO of the TJHC, Mr Francis Sullivan, said today's announcement is good news for abuse survivors and a clear indication the Archdiocese is working hard to provide fair redress and continuing care for abuse survivors.

"This has been a difficult challenge for the Archdiocese. Archbishop Denis Hart has shown a willingness to listen and the leadership to make the appropriate changes.

"Across the Catholic Church in Australia we are now seeing substantial changes in the way dioceses and religious orders respond to abuse survivors," Mr Sullivan said.

The changes to the *Melbourne Response* follow on from other major reforms including:

- changes to the way the Church responds to civil claims of child sexual abuse
- ongoing calls for and engagement in the development of a national independent redress scheme
- the development of a comprehensive database detailing all available information relating to individual cases of child sexual abuse within the church
- the establishment of a new independent child protection and vulnerable adult safeguarding office which is soon to be announced
- the introduction of dedicated child safeguarding and professional standards offices into many diocese and religious orders.

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For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

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

Truth Justice and Healing Council

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