

MEDIA RELEASE

Catholic community needs to continue the push for reform



13 March 2017

Unless Catholic Church leaders, backed by the Catholic community continue to push for church reform, particularly post the child sex abuse royal commission, then the Church in Australia risks becoming increasingly marginalised according Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council.

In a major speech to more than 230 interested Catholics at a Catalyst for Renewal event in Sydney on Friday night Mr Sullivan said the Church in Australia could end up as a "marginalised rump" unless there is real change over the coming years.

"If the Church in Australia doesn't see continuous, concerted change from our leaders – driven and backed by an active and demanding Catholic community – then our church as a religion will become a marginalised rump, stripped of credibility and relevance..." he told the audience.

"If we do not continue to push – and push hard – the impetus for change will fade, inertia will set in, reformists will be shunned, and the victims of what has been the greatest betrayal in the Catholic Church in Australia will remain mired in hopelessness, despair and anger.

"This is a very dangerous time for the Catholic Church in Australia," Mr Sullivan said.

The speech came in the wake of the final Royal Commission hearing into the Catholic Church and the release of data which showed some 1,880 priests, religious brothers and sisters, and lay people had been identified as alleged perpetrators in abuse claims made to the Australian Catholic Church by 4,445 victims.

Mr Sullivan said it is now incumbent on the Catholic community to hold to account any church leader who has ever pronounced apologies or actions or sentiments or commitments to putting victims and survivors first.

Read speech [here](#)

Media contact: Michael Salmon 0417 495 018

The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.