

MEDIA RELEASE

TJHC joins Sandringham community at ‘Spirituality in the Pub’ meeting in Melbourne



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The future of the Catholic Church and its response to child sex abuse were the main focus of a ‘Spirituality in the Pub’ meeting in the Sandringham Hotel in Melbourne’s west this week.

More than 150 people attended the event, titled *‘The Royal Commission: What happens now?’*, to hear the CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, Francis Sullivan, talk about the reforms which have taken place in the Church over recent years and the challenges it continues to face.

“It is unlikely that we will ever be able to do enough to allow healing to take place for all survivors of clerical child sexual abuse. But we must keep trying,” Mr Sullivan said.

“For a long time the Catholic Church has hidden and often covered up clerical child sexual abuse. Being real about this means we now have to talk about it, bring it out of the dark and say what it means.”

Mr Sullivan said that in December this year the Commission will deliver its final report to government.

“In it the Commission will make a range of recommendations as to how institutions across Australia should respond to allegations of child sexual abuse and how these same institutions should operate to ensure children are safe,” he said.

“Much of the Commission’s final report will focus on the Catholic Church.

“If the Church does not respond to these recommendations fully and in a reasonable time frame then we will continue to attract the same criticism of arrogance and hubris as we have for many years.

“The community both in and outside the Church will continue to say that we ‘just do not get it,’” Mr Sullivan said.

Mr Sullivan told the meeting it is vital the Church leadership establish an entity with similar independence to the Truth Justice and Healing Council to assist with the implementation of the Commission’s recommendations.

“It should also have the capacity to monitor and report publically on where the Church is up to in implementing the reforms.

“While much has been done over the past five years and major changes have taken place to the way in which church leaders respond to child sexual abuse claims more still needs to be done,” Mr Sullivan said.

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