

Blog



Still much more to be done Francis Sullivan 13 July 2017

As the Royal Commissioners meet behind closed doors to finalise their observations and recommendations the rest of us begin to consider the implications for our organisations and services.

Obviously what is actually recommended and in turn implemented lies in the future. But some action can happen now.

Already we have seen the establishment of Catholic Professional Standards, a company limited by guarantee with a brief to set, monitor and report on compliance to standards of safeguarding in all Church organisations, big and small.

Although there are similar organisations in Ireland, the US and Canada, CPS will actually be holding bishops and religious leaders accountable in a very public and rigorous way. It will not be a voluntary exercise, but rather an obligation on the Church leadership to act.

There are many areas where the Church needs to smarten up its standards monitoring and undoubtedly needs to demonstrate, through public reporting, that it is continually pushing for best practice and compliance.

Given the personal reputations and standing of the CPS directors I am confident that the company is in very good hands. Along with its new CEO, Sharee Limbrick, CPS will be a crucial element in the post-Royal Commission implementation agenda for the Church.

However more than CPS is required.

The Church leadership needs to put in place an oversight mechanism that will assess how the recommendations and learnings from the Royal Commission are being implemented in the Church. This Commission needs to have long reaching impact. Governments need to respond. So too does the Church.

Negotiating the process of the Royal Commission was only the first phase.

Now the time for imaginative and innovative responses has arrived. If in the time ahead there is a perception that the Church has reverted to a 'business as usual' approach, then we should be rightly condemned.