

MEDIA RELEASE

Commonwealth releases child sexual abuse redress Bill



26 October 2017

Minister for Social Services, Christian Porter has today introduced the long-awaited Commonwealth Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual abuse Bill 2017 into the Federal Parliament.

The proposed legislation will cap payments at \$150,000 and will also allow survivors access to counselling and a direct apology from the institution in which the abuse occurred.

Mr Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, said the Bill is just the start of what is looking to be a long process to get all states, territories and institutions into the scheme.

"Without state and territory support, according to the Minister, it is constitutionally impossible for state-based institutions to be part of the scheme.

"As it stands the proposed legislation can only cover those abused in Commonwealth institutions, which is about 1,000 of an estimated 60,000 survivors.

"What is now very clear is that the Bill in its current form does not allow institutions which operate with state borders to be part of the scheme," Mr Sullivan said.

"This is a huge issue for the tens of thousands of people who were abused as children in institutions not run by the Commonwealth including Catholic schools, orphanages and parishes.

"The Catholic Church has said from the very start of the discussions around redress that it supports and will be part of a national redress scheme as recommended by the Royal Commission.

"To achieve this the Federal Government now has to put in the hard work to get the states to come on board and play their part in delivering justice for all survivors, not just a relative handful abused in Commonwealth institutions."

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