

MEDIA RELEASE

TJHC meets with Catholic School Parents in Hobart and MacKillop Family Services in Melbourne



14 November 2017

Francis Sullivan, TJHC CEO, addressed MacKillop Family Services' national leadership team in Melbourne last week.

Around 50 managers from Victoria, Western Australia and NSW heard about the issues emerging from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the structural, governance and cultural issues that may have contributed.

"There is a huge distinction in public perception of the Catholic Church and the services provided through Catholic social services, health and education," Mr Sullivan said.

"When people think about the Catholic Church, their mind quickly goes to the scandal, but people still have confidence in the many services provided by the Church.

"In the past, most abuse happened in 'total, or closed institutions' where staff had significant influence and individuals were stripped of their identity in favour of institutional identity, where harsh treatment was justified, and hyper-masculine values were enforced. This was particularly so in seminaries, boarding schools and orphanages," he said.

And while things are changing, he said there's a long way to go.

"Staff training which supports a preferred culture must deal with dissent, conflict, difference and authority," he said.

Earlier in the week Francis Sullivan addressed the national conference of Catholic School Parents Australia in Hobart.

Delegates sought clarification on a number of issues, including the confessional, celibacy and the newly established Catholic Professional Standards Ltd and how the work of the new entity might influence child safety policies and procedures in schools.

Catholic School Parents Australia is the national peak representative body for parents with children in Catholic schools. It represents the parents and carers of over 760,000 students in every state and territory across Australia.

TJHC Media contact: Michael Salmon 0417 495 018

Truth Justice and Healing Council

PO Box 4593 KINGSTON ACT 2604 | Tel: +61 2 6234 0900 | Fax: +61 2 6234 0999