

MEDIA RELEASE

NSW Government should re-think victims of crime compensation scheme: Truth Justice and Healing Council CEO says

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Mr Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Council, has today said the NSW Government should reconsider its reported changes to the State's victims of crime compensation scheme.

According to reports, the NSW Victims Rights and Support Bill, proposes a statute of limitations for people claiming compensation for violence including child abuse or sexual assault. An application must be made within 10 years of the act or, if the victim was a child when it occurred, within 10 years after they turn 18.

"The changes that are being reported, including a statute of limitation on reporting sexual abuse would not be in the best interest of past, and for that matter, future victims of child sexual assault," Mr Sullivan said.

"For many reasons victims of childhood sexual abuse often don't report the crimes for many years.

"To limit the disclosure period at all seems like an inappropriate way to encourage victims to come forward," Mr Sullivan said.

"Despite the Church attempting to settle claims to avoid the added trauma of court for victims we don't think any law reform restricting access to compensation is in the best interest of victims of child sexual abuse.

"We would encourage the NSW Government to reconsider the proposed changes so victims are not in any way limited in seeking justice and compensation," Mr Sullivan said.

Mr Sullivan said the Catholic Church, through the Truth Justice and Healing Council, would be looking at improvements to the Church's compensation procedures.

The Truth Justice and Healing Council has been established by the Catholic Church to help the Church response to the Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Its role is to oversee the Church's engagement with the Commission, to develop new policies to protect young people and to ensure the Church responds to any future complaints appropriately with justice, putting the needs of victims first.

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