

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Truth Justice and Healing Council CEO addresses Catechist Directors about the Royal Commission into child sexual assault

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Mr Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Council, today told Catechists from across the ACT and NSW that the Royal Commission into child sexual assault would pose a challenge to the way they talk to children in State schools.

Speaking at the annual Catholic Conference of Religious Educators in State Schools in Canberra, Mr Sullivan said the history of sexual abuse in the Church was shameful and confronting.

“Catechist and others are now struggling with this painful legacy,” Mr Sullivan said.

“At its best the Catholic Church promotes the dignity of individuals and the common good of society with the pursuit of truth and goodness as its touchstones. There is no better witness to this than the teaching profession and its ministry in schools.

“Finding appropriate ways to discuss the past will help formative minds come to terms with this history.

“Admitting the failures will help reclaim credibility. Making decisive change and reaching out to those who have been damaged will rekindle trust.

“In addressing the tragedy of child sexual abuse we must all talk humbly in our public responses and act justly with victims.

“But it is also important to explain our history and to outline the professional changes that have come about over the past 20 years,” Mr Sullivan said.

More than 20 Directors of Catechist, who oversee some 5,000 volunteer scripture teachers across NSW and the ACT attended the annual conference in Canberra.

The Truth Justice and Healing Council has been established by the Catholic Church to help the Church respond 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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