

Blog

**TRUTH
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COUNCIL**

Last week as I walked along Cottesloe Beach, I was amazed by the wild, some might say, tempestuous seas. I was in Perth meeting with MercyCare, a leading Catholic health provider, but these violent seas stopped me in my tracks.

As the Royal Commission begins private hearings next week I couldn't help but wonder if these stormy seas are similar to what we can expect over the next few months. It will be a tough and difficult time ahead, but our whole purpose and agenda is to encourage the truth so that we can bring healing to the people that have been damaged.

The way we embrace the Royal Commission, the decisions we take, the public positions we adopt all need to signal this. So, even when the seas are wild, like Cottesloe last week, it is just natural. And recognizing our failures and the harm that has been caused is a natural process we must go through in order to achieve sustainable healing to those who have been damaged.

MercyCare is a really creative and exciting new development in the Catholic Church health and aged care area. They provide support and assistance to many vulnerable people and they are also very committed to the Royal Commission process and bringing about just outcomes.

A lot of the work the Catholic Church does is highly prized by the community. Our Catholic hospitals are full, our schools are full, and our welfare services are stretched.

People value the Church in action, but it is the history of abuse that has betrayed that mission. That is why it is so important that the whole truth of this history is revealed, because the good works of the church, and the people in those works, and why they are doing them needs to be confirmed.

Last Friday I flew to Sydney to attend the Biannual Bishops Conference and present the work of the Truth, Justice and Healing Council (TJHC) to date.

I provided an update about the Royal Commission and the documentation discovery process. So far Brisbane, Rockhampton, Bathurst, Wollongong, Bunbury and Geraldton have been asked to provide information.

Every document whether an email, or a diary entry, or a large file needs to be collated. It is a painstaking, time-consuming job that falls to the people in the office, and it is so heartening to see their dedication to the job.

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They haven't taken this lightly; they want to demonstrate how everything has been handled over the years. We haven't had any resistance, and for an organization as large as the Catholic Church this is very impressive.

Over the next few months activity around the Royal Commission will grow. Religious orders and schools need to be ready; at any time there could be a call for documents.

The TJHC and the Church is open and ready to assist the Royal Commission in anything it asks us to do.

The TJHC members are strong people with a sound ethical appreciation of life and they will make good and honest decisions.

We are passionate about our agenda - to bring lasting healing to those that have been damaged.

Francis Sullivan