

Blog

**TRUTH
JUSTICE
HEALING
COUNCIL**

When people ask me about the role of the Truth Justice and Healing Council (TJHC), they are generally alarmed and overwhelmed (on our behalf) by the enormity of our task. They wonder how we will manage and cope with preparing for the Royal Commission and what it will mean for the future of the Church.

The answers lie at the coalface, with people working tirelessly for the Church around the country. These dedicated people want to discover the truth about this dark period in the Church, with the hope of achieving sustainable healing to those who have been damaged. I can tell you there is no resistance or apprehension, just steely determination to truly support the Church's honest and open approach to the Royal Commission.

I have been fortunate to be on the road this week, supporting Church workers and showing them there is a bit of flesh and bone to the TJHC. It is important for people in the Church, Church agencies and institutions to have an opportunity for a proper dialogue. They need the opportunity to ask questions and talk and discuss the many complex issues and challenges they face.

Earlier in the week I was in Cairns meeting with Bishop James Foley and the heads of all the Catholic agencies. I was humbled by their tremendous support for the Church's direct and sincere approach to the Royal Commission.

On Wednesday I drove to Wollongong and met with Bishop Peter Ingham and a large gathering of Clergy, representatives from the Catholic agencies and many school principals. The Wollongong diocese was formally called by the Royal Commission to provide documents, and they have almost completed this task. They are a very professional and committed organization and they have done a great job to identify and deliver the many documents and requirements of the Royal Commission.

At the TJHC we can feel the momentum building and the tempo picking up as we prepare for the Royal Commission. Over the next few months we will also begin the very important process of analyzing all the policies and procedures of the Church to determine what improvements need to be made to guarantee the welfare and safety of children.

The Federal Budget announced this week that the Government has promised \$434.1 million over four years for the Royal Commission. This is a sizeable investment by the Government and also highlights how much work needs to be squeezed in over the next four years.

Next week I drive to Galong, in the Harden Shire 100km north west of Canberra, to meet with the Canberra and Goulburn Clergy at their assembly.

It has been a busy, yet rewarding week. I have been inspired by the resolve and commitment of so many in the Church to support the Church's position of honesty and openness towards the Royal Commission. It is the work of so many that will bring lasting peace to those that have been damaged.

Francis Sullivan