

# MEDIA RELEASE



## Truth Justice Healing Council briefs Clergy Life and Ministry on Royal Commission into Child Sex Abuse

3 July 2013

Mr Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, has met with more than 30 priests responsible for the pastoral care and support of clergy to discuss the role of the Council as it prepares for the start of public hearing at the Royal Commission into child sexual abuse in September.

Speaking at the National Conference of Directors of Clergy Life and Ministry in Sydney's north-west Mr Sullivan said priests and clergy need to help parishioners understand what the Catholic Church has done and is doing to protect children.

"We need to walk alongside those who have been damaged through the abuse scandals. The path of atonement and reconciliation demands as much.

"As pastors and spiritual guides this would be part of your core business," Mr Sullivan told the conference.

Mr Sullivan highlighted a number of initiatives currently underway in some Parishes including:

- Providing opportunities and an atmosphere where people can discuss the issues surrounding the Royal Commission, including how the Church has handled clerical sexual abuse issues;
- Creating expressions of atonement and reconciliation in liturgies and at local Church events and meetings;
- Providing local avenues through which anyone who has been damaged can receive support and access the Royal Commission process if they so wish;
- Monitoring and supporting fellow clergy and other Church employees in a spirit of mutual support and compassion;
- Providing updated information about current Church procedures and policies to address child sexual abuse allegations; and
- Reaching out to victim support groups to continue the dialogue to achieve better pastoral practice for victims.

Mr Sullivan said that while engagement with parishioners will be different in every parish any help Church leaders, including local parish priests, can offer congregations to better understand what is happening, how the Church is responding and what is being done to protect children is vital.

The Truth Justice and Healing Council was established by the Catholic Church to coordinate the Catholic 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.

For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to [www.tjhcouncil.org.au](http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au)

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