

TRUTH JUSTICE HEALING COUNCIL

The Truth, Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's response to the Royal Commission with a commitment to cooperation, openness and justice for victims and survivors.

The Truth, Justice and Healing Council has been established by the Catholic Church to help the Church fully embrace the Australian Government's Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Council will help the Church deal with the tragic legacy of child sexual abuse and help victims and survivors to be heard and supported.

The Royal Commission is an opportunity for the Church to explain the way it has treated victims and survivors, to acknowledge past wrongs and failings and to find ways in which to work towards justice and healing for all.

Importantly, it is an opportunity for victims and survivors of sexual abuse to come forward and be heard in an environment of support and safety.

The Council will tell the full story of child abuse in the Catholic Church including what has been done to protect children, particularly since the 1990s and the introduction of the reconciliation schemes, Towards Healing and the Melbourne Response.

The Council will also work on developing new policies and procedures to protect young people in the future and to help the Church respond to any future complaints appropriately and justly, putting the needs of victims and survivors first.

If you have been the victim of sexual abuse within the Church or you know someone who has you can contact the police by calling 131 444 or if you are in Victoria call 1800 333 000

You can also contact the Royal Commission through its national call centre on: 1800 099 340

The Catholic Church's Towards Healing agency in your state can be contacted through the Church's National Committee for Professional Standards on (02) 9669 6218

Contact the Truth Justice and Healing Council

Call the Council

on 02 6234 0900
between 9am and 5pm
AEST Monday to Friday

Write to the Council

PO Box 4593
Kingston ACT 2604
or send a fax to:
02 6234 0999

Email the Council

You can email the Council
at
info@tjhcouncil.org.au

You can also go to our website to subscribe to receive our newsletters, media releases, blogs and other information

www.tjhcouncil.org.au

Why has the Council been set up?

The Council will be the Church's representative during the Commission process.

The Council will assist the Commission by dealing directly with the many different diocesan and religious organisations around Australia from which the Commission may be seeking information on how the Church has dealt with child sexual abuse.

The Council will help the Church and all its dioceses and religious orders cooperate with the Royal Commission by producing evidence and complying with all of the Commission's requests.

The Bishops and the religious leaders of the Catholic Church acknowledge the pain and suffering experienced by victims of child abuse and their families. Our hearts and prayers are with them and with those charged with the responsibilities of serving on the Royal Commission.

Australian Bishops and Religious Leaders, December 2012

Who is on the Council and what are their backgrounds?

The Council is made up of 13 men and women with professional and other expertise in the areas of child sexual abuse, paedophilia, trauma, mental illness, suicide, education, public administration and governance.

Ten of the Council members are lay people and four of the Council members have either been abused themselves or have direct family members who have suffered clerical sexual abuse.

Who has established the Council?

The Council has been established by the two overarching Catholic Church organisations, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and Catholic Religious Australia which, together, represent dioceses and congregations across Australia.

This is the first time dioceses and religious orders across Australia have authorised a single body to help represent them en masse to any legal body, let alone a Royal Commission.

Who will the Council represent at the Royal Commission?

The Council will represent dioceses and religious orders at the Royal Commission and will be the primary voice and the channel by which the Royal Commission will engage with the whole Church.

“We must seize this time, a time of trial, of suffering, yet a God-given opportunity for a rebirth like that of Baptism, where purification clears the path to new life as a more humble, open church with that ‘mind that was in Christ Jesus’.”

Congregational leader of the Sisters of Charity and President of Catholic Religious Australia,
Sr Annette Cunliffe RSC

“Hearts are heavy with a deep sense of shame and dismay about the crimes of sexual abuse committed by those who were supposed to represent Christ to them. The Church is committed to eradicating this awful evil and to rebuilding trust.”

Archbishop of Melbourne and President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Denis Hart