

MEDIA RELEASE

Victorian Government to create new sexual predator grooming laws



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The Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council has welcomed a proposed new law in Victoria which could see sexual predators who groom young people for sex face up to 10 years in prison.

The new offence is part of the Victorian Government's response to the recommendations of this year's Parliamentary inquiry into the handling of child sex abuse allegations.

CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, Francis Sullivan said the new law would provide young people, parents and the community with greater protection against sexual predators.

"This is the first stage of the Victorian Government's response to this year's parliamentary report and it sends a strong message that it is taking the report seriously.

"Grooming young potential victims often includes infiltrating families to win the trust of parents and carers. It is insidious, calculated and the ultimate betrayal of trust," Mr Sullivan said.

Under the proposed law sexual abuse does not have to occur for a person to commit the offence.

Victorian Attorney General Robert Clark said the grooming law would apply to any communication with a child, parent or carer intended to facilitate involving the child in a sexual offence.

"This law recognises the insidious methods that these sexual predators use in befriending and relationship building prior to perpetrating their abuse."

The law will apply to both grooming through personal contact and grooming using the internet or any other means.

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The Truth Justice and Healing Council is coordinating the Catholic Church's engagement with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

For more information on the Truth Justice and Healing Council go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

For more information on the Royal Commission go to: <http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>