

MEDIA RELEASE

Queensland Catholic Education Commission meets with Child protection experts



19 May 2014

More than 130 principals, teachers and administrators from Catholic schools across Queensland met in Brisbane last week to discuss child protection issues such as reporting sex abuse to police, sexting and ensuring children are heard.

The Queensland Catholic Education Commission Child Protection In-service Day is part of an ongoing program designed to build on existing policies and procedures and develop proactive approaches to student protection.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council addressed the conference and provided an update of the work of the Council and the progress of the Royal Commission into institutional response to child sexual abuse.

Mr Sullivan told the group the Catholic Church is likely to be involved in at least another four more public hearings before the end of the year.

“While Catholic schools have done a huge amount of work over the years to ensure children are as safe as possible there are still too many examples of where procedures and policies are not followed,” Mr Sullivan said.

The high-level meeting was addressed by Megan Mitchell, National Children’s Commissioner Australian Human Rights Commission, who is one of Australia’s leading advocates for the rights of children.

Ms Mitchell told the meeting about what is being done and what needs to be done to help ensure that their voices are heard by decision-makers and the community.

Dr Kath Albury, Senior Lecturer, School of Arts and Media, at the University of New South Wales spoke about the issues of ‘sexting’ including the ethical implications, the law, sexting in the workplace and their implications for Catholic school communities.

Mr David Eljiz from the Professional Services Unit at the Catholic Education Office in Sydney spoke to the complexities of sexualized behaviours in schools and the legal responsibilities of schools, safety of students and the impact on their education.

Detective Senior Sergeant Brett Barber, from the Queensland Police Service’s Child and Sexual Crime Unit, spoke about the importance of constantly strengthening the relationship between the Queensland Police and the Catholic Education Sector at state and local levels and the areas of focus in 2014.

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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/>