

MEDIA RELEASE



Principals and priests meet in Shepparton to talk child protection

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More than 50 principals, administrators and priests from Catholic schools and parishes across central Victoria met in Shepparton last week to discuss child protection issues and to receive an update of the work of the Royal Commission.

Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council told the meeting the Catholic Church needs to continue to be open and transparent about the way it has dealt with child sexual abuse.

“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.

“There is now a very clear understanding within the Church that the Commission is about being open and forthright.

“It is about the Church and other institutions not being defensive, about giving survivors the time and room to tell their stories and about all institutions taking responsibility of how they have acted.

Mr Sullivan said throughout Australia, from Catholic schools to parish meetings, there is significant interest in the Church’s history of child sexual abuse, how we have responded historically and the reforms we are putting in place to make all Catholic institutions as safe as possible for children.

“There is also strong interest in what the Church will do to ensure survivors of child sexual abuse are treated fairly and with compassion.

The meeting was held on Friday 23 May as part of Catholic Education Sandhurst’s term-three Diocesan Primary Principals Network Meeting held at St Brendan’s Monsignor Peter Jeffery Centre.

Catholic Education Sandhurst is made up of 40 primary schools, two P-8 schools, one P-12 college, nine secondary colleges and three flexible learning settings located across central Victoria.

Mr Sullivan told the meeting the Catholic Church is likely to be involved in at least four more public hearings before the end of the year including the recently announced Canberra hearing into two Marist Brothers.

Media contact: Michael Salmon 0417 495 018

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/>