

MEDIA RELEASE

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

3 July 2014



Mr Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Truth Justice and Healing Council, has told more than 25 priests responsible for the pastoral care and support of clergy that local parish priests are the most sustainable and credible links into the Catholic community.

Speaking at the National Conference of Directors of Clergy Life and Ministry at the Mary Mackillop centre in North Sydney Mr Sullivan said priests and clergy need to help parishioners understand what the Catholic Church has done and is doing to protect children.

“It is incumbent on the clergy to tell the whole truth about the history and impact of clerical sexual abuse on survivors and on the church,” Mr Sullivan said.

“It is the parish priests who still have the credibility and the respect of parishioners. You are believed when you talk about what the Church is doing and how we are responding to the Commission.

“Like the continuing strong link the church has through our schools and in our health and welfare services into the broader community, the link parish priest have directly with parishioners is still strong.

“We need to build on this by being open and transparent, by not sugar-coating the damage and harm that has been done and by continuing to push the Church leadership to instigate the reforms that are absolutely necessary.

Mr Sullivan said local priests must help the Church “work through the inertia” and help do “the surgery on church culture” so that the Church can face up to the crisis and come through the Commission stronger and more credible.

“We need to walk alongside those people 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.

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

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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.

Truth Justice and Healing Council

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