

MEDIA RELEASE



National Redress Scheme Preferable to Existing Victims of Crime Compensation Schemes

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Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council said adult survivors of institutional child sexual abuse would be better off under a national redress scheme than existing arrangements for redress through state-based statutory victims of crime compensation schemes.

The Council's submission to the Royal Commission's seventh issues paper outlines disadvantages of statutory victims of crime compensation (SVOCC) schemes.

Mr Sullivan said that separate SVOCC schemes operate in each of the Australian states and territories.

"One of the major problems with these schemes are they are not uniform, deliver different financial outcomes and are sometimes difficult and complicated to access.

"For these and many other reasons most SVOCC schemes currently do not provide optimal assistance and redress to victims of institutional child sexual abuse.

"The TJHC has publicly supported a statutory independent national redress or compensation scheme to provide financial reparation to victims of child sexual abuse within institutions in Australia. This is much more likely to provide victims of abuse with justice and fair compensation," Mr Sullivan said.

In its submission to the Royal Commission the Council says that while there may still be a limited role for SVOCC schemes significant reforms would need to be made including:

- national consistency to ensure similar outcomes for victims of child sexual abuse across the country
- simplified, accessible application processes including interpreters and staff who are cross-culturally trained
- easy to understand information about the SVOCC process made readily available
- compliance with principles of natural justice and consistent standards of proof
- timeliness in decision making with no limitation periods
- power to order that financial awards be paid by the institution responsible for the child sexual abuse
- capacity for awards to include non-monetary redress such as an apology
- the provision of ongoing counselling and medical services

"The Council considers that any scheme for victims should be independent, generous, and designed and developed in consultation with victims, and should represent best practice in terms of process and outcomes for victims of child sexual abuse," Mr Sullivan said.

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Read full submission here:

<http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au/media/85811/141002-Submission-Issues-Paper-7-SVOCC-Schemes.pdf>

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/>