

MEDIA RELEASE

Catholic welfare and other services still respected by community



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Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, said the role played by Catholic welfare organisations delivering social services to the more than 1 million people across Australia every year continued to attract the support of the broad community despite the sex abuse crisis in the Church.

Speaking at the Catholic Social Services Australia leadership forum in Canberra today Mr Sullivan said the work of Catholic social services, health and education organisations is still respected and highly regarded by the community and the non-government and government partners they work with.

"What we have seen over the past decades as a result of the sexual abuse scandal is that respect for clergy and religious leaders has plummeted but the regard for the work the Catholic Church does on the ground is still very high," Mr Sullivan said.

"This is particularly true in Catholic social services agencies like Centacare, MercyCare and MacKillop Family Services and others, where people in crisis are able to find support.

"The delivery of these services is at the core of the Church's mission.

"It seems that when the word 'Catholic' is put in front of welfare, education and health the community still respects the work being done. It is only when 'Catholic' and 'Church' come together that respect and credibility collapses."

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA) is the Catholic Church's peak national body for social services in Australia with more than 60 member organisations providing social services in local communities across metropolitan, rural, regional and remote Australia.

CSSA works with Catholic organisations, governments and other churches to develop social welfare policies, programs and other strategic responses that work towards the economic, social and spiritual well-being of the Australian community.

More than 80 CEOs, directors and senior managers from Catholic welfare organisations attended the annual Catholic Social Services Australia forum in Canberra today.

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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 TJHCgo to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

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