

MEDIA RELEASE

Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Council acknowledge the importance of vigilance



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Francis Sullivan, CEO of the Catholic Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council, has told parent representatives from Catholic schools across Tasmania that while schools are among the safest places for children, unless child protection policies are rigorously enforced, they are meaningless.

Speaking at the Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Council annual general meeting in Launceston on Sunday, Mr Sullivan said Catholic schools throughout Australia continue to play a major role in the education of hundreds of thousands of school children.

"What we have found is that while Church leaders have come in for stiff criticism; Catholic education, social services and health organisations continue to be widely supported by the Australian community, despite the stories of abuse being recounted at the Royal Commission.

"The fact is Catholic schools continue to run at capacity in most parts of the country.

"But we need to be vigilant. Every child has a right to be safe at school and parents and carers also have a right to expect their children will be safe.

"While our schools have some of the most rigorous child protection policies and procedures of any institutions those protocols are of little value if teachers, administrators and other school staff are not aware of them, fully trained and accountable.

"This is where organisations sometimes fail, in ensuring policies are followed through and totally adhered to," Mr Sullivan said.

The Patron of the Tasmanian Parents Council the Archbishop of Hobart, Julian Porteous, attended the conference and spoke about the family and the important role of parents as educators.

Mr Sullivan welcomed the release at the conference of the Tasmanian Catholic Schools Parents Council position statement on child sexual abuse and its acknowledgment that the breach of trust has led to unimaginable consequences for young people and their families.

There are currently some 15,000 student in Catholic Education within Tasmania attending 37 Catholic primary schools and secondary schools and colleges across the state.

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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 TJHC go to: www.tjhcouncil.org.au

For more information on the Royal Commission go to:
<http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>