

The horror of the past

The release of the data this week into the extent of clerical child sexual abuse in the Australian Catholic Church has been both a statistical and spiritual ground zero for millions of people around Australia and around the world.

It has had a devastating impact on the survivors of abuse, on ordinary Catholics and on the broader community.

As I said in my statement to the Commission on Monday the numbers are shocking, tragic, indefensible and an indictment on both the men who perpetrated the abuse and the leaders at the time who covered up these crimes and turned their heads.

Much has been said and written about the data since Monday so there is little I can add, but to reiterate the clear message that while words are important the commitment of the Catholic Church in Australia to correcting the appalling failures of the past can only be measured through actions and continued vigilance.

We must continue to acknowledge the past, to accept responsibility, to understand the damage that has been done to survivors, to make the changes and to work tirelessly to ensure the abuse never happens again.

Francis Sullivan
10 February 2017